

Lower KS3 Recommended Reading

December 2020

The following offers some suggestions for reading for girls in Years 7 and 8.

They are all good examples of the best books currently available, both old and new (excluding standard classic titles which the girls should be reading additionally). All are available from the School Library and can be reserved via email.

Happy Reading! From the Library and the English department

Katherine Woodfine

The Mystery of the Clockwork Sparrow

Left penniless when her father dies, Sophie is pleased to find a job in the millinery department of Sinclair's, an Edwardian department store. The other girls decide she's stuck-up, but she makes friends with Billy, a junior porter and Lillian, who models clothes during the day and dances in the chorus line in a theatre at night. A daring burglary plunges them all into an exciting – and dangerous – adventure.

Cathryn Constable

The Wolf Princess

On a school trip to Russia, Sophie and her two friends find themselves on the wrong train. They are rescued by the beautiful Princess Anna Volkonskaya, who takes them to her winter palace and mesmerises them with stories of lost diamonds and a tragic past. But as night falls and wolves prowl, Sophie discovers more than dreams in the crumbling palace of secrets.

Jill Hucklesby

Deeper Than Blue

Amy is a thirteen-year-old champion swimmer. When she and her best friend Sophie meet with an accident one day, Amy's life changes dramatically. Amy's story of how she comes to terms with the consequences of her accident is told with sensitivity and humour. In hospital, Amy makes friends with quirky Harry, and begins to feel more positive. Her relationship with her parents changes too, and the family's move from Nottingham to Brighton heralds a new start. But is it enough? Can Amy start swimming again and even triumph in competition?

Sue Townsend

The Secret Diary of Adrian Mole Aged 13 3/4

Teenager Adrian Mole writes about his parents' marital troubles, the dog (surely not the first to swallow the tree off the Christmas cake?), his life as a tortured and misunderstood poet and his first love, Pandora. Some of the references to the eighties will be lost on the current generation of readers but the humour and teenage angst are timeless.

"Wednesday June 10th – Pandora and I are in love! It is official! She told Claire Nelson, who told Nigel, who told me. I told Nigel to tell Claire to tell Pandora that I return her love. I am over the moon with joy. I can overlook the fact that Pandora smokes five Benson and Hedges a day and has her own lighter. When you are in love such things cease to matter".

Ruth Fitzgerald

Emily Sparkes and the Friendship Fiasco

Emily Sparkes thinks having your best friend move away at the same time as your parents decide to have a new baby is more trauma than anyone should have to cope with. But things get worse when she's paired with a boy for the school trip. Emily is determined to escape him and thinks her luck has changed when new girl Chloe turns up. Unfortunately, everyone has gone Chloe mad and Emily finds her 'sworn enemy' Zuzanna wants to pair with Chloe too. Getting and keeping Chloe as a friend proves harder than Emily anticipated and leads her into a whole new set of disasters...

Michael Ford

The Poisoned House

Abigail is a maidservant in Greave Hall, an elegant London household governed by the tyrannical housekeeper, Mrs Cotton. Whilst the widowed master slips slowly into madness, Mrs Cotton gradually usurps the position of mistress of the house. As Mrs Cotton's malice intensifies odd things start happening around the house. It seems as though a ghostly presence is trying to get Abi to leave Greave Hall and reveal that the house and the people within it are hiding terrible secrets - secrets that may cost Abi her life. Abi can trust no one.

Jo Cotterill

A Library of Lemons

Calypso's mum died a few years ago and her emotionally incompetent dad can't, or won't, talk about mum at all. Instead he throws himself into writing his book the "History of the Lemon". Meanwhile the house is dusty, there's never any food in the fridge, and Calypso's grief has made her retreat from everyone and everything into a world of books. When a new girl, Mae, arrives at school, the girls' shared love of reading and writing stories draws them close. Mae's friendship and her lively and chaotic house - where people argue and hug each other - makes Calypso feel more normal, and more wanted, than she has for a long time. But when Calypso finally plucks up the courage to invite Mae over to her house, things go unexpectedly, disastrously wrong as she discovers a shocking truth about her dad.

Suzanne Lafleur

Eight Keys

Eleven-year-old Elise feels stuck. Her school locker-buddy squashes her lunch and laughs at her, every day. She doesn't want to go to school and her best friend, Franklin, just makes things worse. She is ready for something – anything - to be different. One day Elise discovers an incredible secret. A secret that might just help her unlock her past and take a chance on the future. "I decided that tomorrow I would see what that key opened up. It had my name on it, after all..."

Mary Hooper

Fallen Grace (has some disturbing content but nothing graphic)

The setting is Victorian London where the heroine, Grace has to suppress her grief for her dead child and get on with the business of living, scraping together enough money selling watercress to cover rent on a bleak cold room and provide a little food. She must also care for her older sister, who is incapable of caring for herself and thwart the villains of the piece - the Unwins - an unscrupulous family who enjoy a rich and luxurious life financed by shady business dealings. They will stop at nothing to defraud Grace and her sister from a potential fortune.

Vanessa Curtis

The Taming of Lilah May (contains mild occasional strong language)

Lilah May is always angry. So angry that she's on the verge of being excluded from school, her parents despair of her, and only one person in the world can put up with and understand her violent mood-swings. And that's her best friend, Bindi. Lilah hasn't always been this way. It all started when her beloved brother Jay disappeared two years ago. No one has heard from him since. And what no one realises is that Lilah blames herself. Lilah's struggling to form relationships and keep her anger under control. But will she ever see Jay again? And is Bindi as trustworthy as she's always believed?

Victor Watson

Paradise Barn

With bombers flying overhead, an evacuee arriving to live among them and several mysterious adult visitors, too, life for Molly and Abigail is transformed during the Second World War. The two girls, helped by Adam the evacuee, are determined to solve the mysteries of the body found on the footpath, the stolen flower press, the missing shovel and even the picture stolen from a French art gallery.

Jana Novotny Hunter

Read My Lips

The students call their school "Deaf City". It is a school for the deaf and hearing impaired which is surprisingly split, pretty strongly, into two warring groups - those who sign, and those who lip-read and speak. Cat's had enough of the often bitter fighting at the school. So what if some students, like her, use sign language and others use speech? With the end of school, they're all going to need help in the hearing world. So Cat decides to learn to speak but when she falls for Joey, who is a speaker, she faces a dilemma. Will she be forced to make a painful choice?