



SUMMER

If you would like to renew a book, or have any comments/queries, please don't hesitate to contact us at [library@newsteadwood.co.uk](mailto:library@newsteadwood.co.uk)

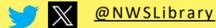
Happy reading! – Miss Mullins, Miss Walker, and Miss Henry



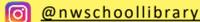
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## Orpington Library's Younger Teens Reading Group

Do you enjoy reading?  
Enjoy talking about books?



Would you like to join the Younger Teens Reading Group at Orpington Library?

If you would like to join, please contact us by email: [orpington.library@gll.org](mailto:orpington.library@gll.org)

Meetings are once a month on a Monday from 5:30-6:30pm, during term time, for ages 11-14 years

We look forward to seeing you! **BETTER**

## Margaret Atwood's 10 Best Books: Ranked

Ahead of the publication of world-renowned Canadian author Margaret Atwood's memoir, *Book of Lives*, Lisa Allardice at *The Guardian* has compiled a ranked list of Atwood's top 10 books. Across her illustrious career, Atwood has written more than 50 books of fiction, poetry and critical essays. Below are the books from the top 10 list that we have in the library. Other ranked titles include *Hag-Seed*, a reworking of Shakespeare's *The Tempest* in 8th place, and Atwood's first novel *The Edible Woman* in 7th place. Click [here](#) to view the list in full.

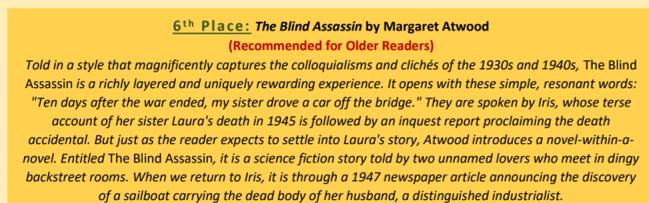
### 10th Place: *The Testaments* by Margaret Atwood (Recommended for Older Readers)

When the van door slammed on Offred's future at the end of *The Handmaid's Tale*, readers had no way of telling what lay ahead for her—freedom, prison or death. With *The Testaments*, the wait is over. Margaret Atwood's sequel picks up the story more than fifteen years after Offred stepped into the unknown, with the explosive testimonies of three female narrators from Gilead.



### 9th Place: *Oryx and Crake* by Margaret Atwood (Recommended for Older Readers)

*Oryx and Crake* is at once an unforgettable love story and a compelling vision of the future. Snowman, known as Jimmy before mankind was overwhelmed by a plague, is struggling to survive in a world where he may be the last human, and mourning the loss of his best friend, Crake, and the beautiful and elusive Oryx whom they both loved. In search of answers, Snowman embarks on a journey—with the help of the green-eyed Children of Crake—through the lush wilderness that was so recently a great city, until powerful corporations took mankind on an uncontrolled genetic engineering ride. Margaret Atwood projects us into a near future that is both all too familiar and beyond our imagining.



### 6th Place: *The Blind Assassin* by Margaret Atwood (Recommended for Older Readers)

Told in a style that magnificently captures the colloquialisms and clichés of the 1930s and 1940s, *The Blind Assassin* is a richly layered and uniquely rewarding experience. It opens with these simple, resonant words: "Ten days after the war ended, my sister drove a car off the bridge." They are spoken by Iris, whose terse account of her sister Laura's death in 1945 is followed by an inquest report proclaiming the death accidental. But just as the reader expects to settle into Laura's story, Atwood introduces a novel-within-a-novel. Entitled *The Blind Assassin*, it is a science fiction story told by two unnamed lovers who meet in dingy backstreet rooms. When we return to Iris, it is through a 1947 newspaper article announcing the discovery of a sailboat carrying the dead body of her husband, a distinguished industrialist.



### 1st Place: *The Handmaid's Tale #1: The Handmaid's Tale* by Margaret Atwood (Recommended for Older Readers)

*Offred* is a Handmaid in *The Republic of Gilead*, a religious totalitarian state in what was formerly known as the United States. She is placed in the household of the Commander, Fred Waterford - her assigned name, *Offred*, means 'of Fred'. She has only one function: to breed. If *Offred* refuses to enter into sexual servitude to repopulate a devastated world, she will be hanged. Yet even a repressive state cannot eradicate hope and desire. As she recalls her pre-revolution life in flashbacks, *Offred* must navigate through the terrifying landscape of torture and persecution in the present day, and between two men upon which her future hangs.

"Keep a little fire burning; however small, however hidden." – Cormac McCarthy



### *I Who Have Never Known Men* by Jacqueline Harpman (Recommended for Older Readers)

Deep underground, thirty-nine women are kept in isolation in a cage. Above ground, a world awaits. Has it been abandoned? Devastated by a virus? Watched over by guards, the women have no memory of how they got there, no notion of time, and only vague recollection of their lives before. But, as the burn of electric light merges day into night and numberless years pass, a young girl - the fortieth prisoner - sits alone an outcast in the corner. Soon she will show herself to be the key to the others' escape and survival in the strange world that awaits them above ground.



### *More Than a Carpenter* by Josh McDowell

The inspirational classic, *More than a Carpenter*, is now updated for a new generation of seekers with a fresh look, revised material, and a new chapter that addresses questions commonly raised today. Former sceptic Josh McDowell is now joined by his son Sean as they examine the evidence about Jesus. Is he really the Lord he claimed to be? How can we know for sure? *More than a Carpenter* offers arguments for faith from a sceptic turned believer.



### *Our Wives Under the Sea* by Julia Armfield (Recommended for Older Readers)

Miri thinks she has got her wife back, when Leah finally returns after a deep-sea mission that ended in catastrophe. It soon becomes clear, though, that Leah is not the same. Whatever happened in that vessel, whatever it was they were supposed to be studying before they were stranded on the ocean floor, Leah has brought part of it back with her, onto dry land and into their home. Moving through something that only resembles normal life, Miri comes to realize that the life that they had before might be gone. Though Leah is still there, Miri can feel the woman she loves slipping from her grasp.



### *Demon Slayer: Volume 7* by Koyoharu Gotouge

While under the care of the Demon Slayer Corps, Hashira, Shinobu, Tanjiro, Zenitsu, Inosuke and Nezuko have recovered. They have even learned a new and powerful technique—Total Concentration! They'll need this new power and all their skill on their next demon-hunting mission aboard the mysterious Infinity Train as it takes them into the dreams of demons!

### *Is Maths Real? & Other Questions That Reveal Mathematics' Deepest Truths* by Eugenia Cheng

Why is  $(-1) = 1$ ? Why do odd and even numbers alternate? What's the point of algebra? Is maths even real? From imaginary numbers to the perplexing order of operations we all had drilled into us, Eugenia Cheng - mathematician, writer and woman on a mission to rid the world of maths phobia - brings us maths as we've never seen it before, revealing how profound insights can emerge from seemingly unlikely sources. Written with intelligence and passion, *Is Maths Real?* is a celebration of the true, curious spirit of the discipline.



### *Dying Every Day: Seneca at the Court of Nero* by James S Romm

At the center, the tumultuous life of Seneca, ancient Rome's preeminent writer and philosopher, beginning with banishment in his fifties and subsequent appointment as tutor to twelve-year-old Nero, future emperor of Rome. Controlling them both, Nero's mother, Julia Agrippina the Younger, Roman empress, great-granddaughter of the Emperor Augustus, sister of the Emperor Caligula, niece and fourth wife of Emperor Claudius. *Dying Every Day* is a portrait of Seneca's moral struggle in the midst of madness and excess. In his treatises, Seneca preached a rigorous ethical creed, exalting heroes who defied danger to do what was right or embrace a noble death. As Nero's adviser, Seneca was presented with a more complex set of choices, as the only man capable of summoning the better aspect of Nero's nature, yet, remaining at Nero's side and colluding in the evil regime he created.

### *What is Race?* by Nikeshe Shukla and Claire Heuchan

An important and timely book on race and racism, encouraging children to think for themselves about the issues involved. Talk about race is often discouraged, but this book aims to bring everyone into the conversation. It explores the history of race and society, giving context to how racist attitudes come into being. It looks at belonging and identity, the damaging effects of stereotyping and the benefits of positive representation. The authors talk sensitively about how to identify and challenge racism, and how to protect against and stop racist behaviour. Aimed at young people aged 10 and upwards.

### *Diary of a Wimpy Kid #3: The Last Straw* by Jeff Kinney

Greg Heffley will never change his wimpy ways. somebody just better tell Greg's dad that. Frank Heffley actually thinks he can get his son to toughen up and he enlists Greg in organised sports and other 'manly' endeavours. Thus far, Greg manages to side-step his father's efforts, then comes the threat of military school and Greg realises, he has to shape up or ship out!

## Bernadine Evaristo Wins One-Off Outstanding Contribution Prize



Author Bernadine Evaristo has received a special, one-off award in honour of the 30th anniversary of the Women's Prize for Fiction. The award, titled the Women's Prize Outstanding Contribution Award, is in honour of Evaristo's career's work as well as her long running advocacy for inclusion and diversity in the arts. Evaristo was "astounded" and grateful to be recognised in this way, and said it was "incredibly validating". The award comes with £100,000 in prize money and a sculpture named *Thoughtful*, created by artist Caroline Russell. Evaristo said that this sum of money is an "unexpected blessing in her life" and plans to use it to help support other women writers. The money and sculpture were presented to Evaristo at an award ceremony on the 12th of June, during which the winners of the 2025 Women's Prizes for Fiction and Non-Fiction were also announced.

It was acknowledged by the Women's Prize judging body that Evaristo received the Outstanding Contribution Award in part due to her Booker win 2019. Evaristo won the Booker Prize for her novel *Girl, Woman, Other* making her the first black woman to win the award, and the second woman overall. Throughout her career, Bernadine Evaristo has worked to amplify underrepresented voices, especially those of women and writers of colour. She has helped set up groups and writing development programmes such as the Theatre of Black Women, and is the president of the Royal Society of Literature. Evaristo says she will keep writing and supporting others and believes we must keep pushing for progress because of the risk of "backlash against freedoms women [have] earned over a century". Original BBC article by Emma Saunders [here](#).

### *Girl, Woman, Other* by Bernadine Evaristo (Recommended for Older Readers)

This is Britain as you've never read it. This is Britain as it has never been told. From Newcastle to Cornwall, from the birth of the twentieth century to the teens of the twenty-first, *Girl, Woman, Other* follows a cast of twelve characters on their personal journeys through this country and the last hundred years. They're each looking for something - a shared past, an unexpected future, a place to call home, somewhere to fit in, a lover, a missed mother, a lost father, even just a touch of hope...



## Student Librarian Well-Being Book Review

In collaboration with Miss Norris and the SEN department, some of our student librarians have been tasked with reviewing books from the library's well-being section. Here's the first brilliant review by Veda in 9N.

### *Blame My Brain: The Amazing Teenage Brain Revealed* by Nicola Morgan

The book, *Blame My Brain: The Amazing Teenage Mind Revealed*, was very inspirational with lots of fun small quizzes and activities that helped to understand the various topics that were discussed in the book. These were very enjoyable as I played with all of my friends. It is a great way to strengthen friendships. The book encompasses various topics about our teenage years which everyone is going through right now. It is a wonderful way to learn more about the changes in your brain and why they are important at this time. It had many engaging scenarios/stories and explained the ways in which the brain works in a simple yet captivating way. The stories were both relatable and informative which made the whole reading experience more enjoyable. It explores themes of both positive and negative states of mind and how to cope through bad times. It broadened my perspective on various topics throughout the book including many things I just learnt or never considered. Did you know that during this stage the grey matter in your brain grows (the smart bit)? During the book there were many quizzes you could do with your friends! Including, but not limited to, guess the person's emotions from their eyes! That was fun. It made me realise that during our teenage years many things happen in our brains, for the better in the long term.

This book is incredibly engaging, and I loved it!

By Veda T, 9N



*Blame My Brain: The Amazing Teenage Brain Revealed* by Nicola Morgan  
Contrary to popular (parental) opinion, teenagers are not the deliberately lazy, risk-taking and work-avoiding individuals they sometimes appear to be to the adults around them. During the teenage years the brain is undergoing its most radical and fundamental change since the age of two. Nicola Morgan's carefully researched, accessible and empathetic examination of the ups and downs of the teenage brain has chapters dealing with powerful emotions, gender differences, the need for more sleep, the urge to take risks and the reasons behind addiction or depression. The comprehensively updated edition of this classic bestseller contains important new research and a brand-new chapter on social media, making it an essential guide for teenagers and adults alike.

## External Competition: Foyle's Young Poets of the Year Award

Entries are now open for the 2025's Foyle's Young Poets of the Year Award. The award is 'one of the biggest and most prestigious poetry competitions for 11-17-year-olds in the world. Every year, 15 top winners and 85 commented poets are chosen; together, they represent some of the most exciting new voices writing today.'

The competition is free to enter, and entrants may submit as many poems as they like. Poems can be on any theme, and in any style, but must be no longer than 40 lines. The deadline for entries is midnight on the 31st of July 2025. Entries can be made online [here](#), or by post. Writing tips and resources compiled by The Poetry Society can be found [here](#).

The Foyle's Young Poets of the Year Award is now in its 27th year, and has 'kick-started the career of some of today's most exciting voices.' The top 15 winners of the award will receive a mentoring package with opportunities to receive support and feedback on their writing, and all 100 winners will receive a year's youth membership of The Poetry Society as well as a bag full of books donated by publishers. Winning poems will also be collected into an anthology.

## Bloomsday – 16th June

Bloomsday, observed annually on the 16th of June, is a commemoration and celebration of the life of Irish writer James Joyce. The day is named for the protagonist of Joyce's novel *Ulysses*, Leopold Bloom. The date was chosen as it is the same date the story of *Ulysses* takes place across: the novel 'chronicles the peripatetic appointments and encounters of Leopold Bloom in Dublin in the course of an ordinary day.'

An early iteration of Bloomsday occurred on the 50th anniversary of the events in the novel, a Wednesday in 1954, when John Ryan (artist, critic, publican and founder of *Envoy* magazine) and the novelist Brian O'Nolan organised what was to be a daylong pilgrimage along the *Ulysses* route. They were joined by several others and travelled in two horse-drawn cabs of the same type driven by Bloom in the novel. The party also assigned themselves the roles of some of the most important characters in *Ulysses*. Since 1994, the Bloomsday Festival has been celebrated in Dublin from the 11th-16th of June. The festival involves a range of cultural activities such as *Ulysses* readings and dramatisations, and enthusiasts often dress in Edwardian costume and retrace Leopold Bloom's route around Dublin. Hard-core devotees of Joyce's work have been known to hold marathon readings of the entire novel, some of which have lasted up to 36 hours. Click [here](#) to find out more about the Bloomsday Festival.



### *Ulysses* by James Joyce

Set entirely on one day, 16 June 1904, *Ulysses* follows Leopold Bloom and Stephen Daedalus as they go about their daily business in Dublin. From this starting point, James Joyce constructs a novel of extraordinary imaginative richness and depth. Unique in the history of literature, *Ulysses* is one of the most important and enjoyable works of the twentieth century.



## The Guardian's Best Books for Children About Refugees

Ahead of Refugee Week (16th-22nd June), *The Guardian* has collected 'entertaining stories, poems and nonfiction to help children of all ages learn about refugees and gain understanding.' The books from this list that we have in the library can be seen below. Click [here](#) to view the list in full. Refugee Week is 'the world's largest arts & culture festival celebrating the contributions, creativity and resilience of refugees and people seeking sanctuary'. Find out more about Refugee Week [here](#).



### Front Desk #1: *Front Desk* by Kelly Yang

Mia Tang has a lot of secrets. Number 1: She lives in a motel, not a big house. Every day, while her immigrant parents clean the rooms, ten-year-old Mia manages the front desk of the Calivista Motel and tends to its guests. Number 2: Her parents hide immigrants. And if the mean motel owner, Mr. Yao, finds out they've been letting them stay in the empty rooms for free, the Tangs will be doomed. Number 3: She wants to be a writer. But how can she when her mom thinks she should stick to math because English is not her first language? It will take all of Mia's courage, kindness, and hard work to get through this year. Will she be able to hold on to her job, help the immigrants and guests, escape Mr. Yao, and go for her dreams?

### Front Desk #2: *Three Keys* by Kelly Yang

Mia Tang thinks she's going to have the best year ever. 1. She and her parents have a motel. 2. She gets to run the front desk. 3. She's finally getting somewhere with her writing. But, on a rollercoaster of challenges, Mia will need all her determination to hang on tight...

### *The Crossing* by Manjeet Mann

Natalie's world is falling apart. She's just lost her mum, and her brother marches the streets of Dover full of hate and anger. Swimming is her only refuge. Sammy has fled his home and family in Eritrea for the chance of a new life in Europe. Every step he takes on his journey is a step into an unknown and unwelcoming future. A twist of fate brings them together and gives them both hope. But is hope enough to mend a broken world?



### *Persepolis* by Marjane Satrapi

*Persepolis* is the story of Satrapi's unforgettable childhood and coming of age within a large and loving family in Tehran during the Islamic Revolution; of the contradictions between private and public life in a country plagued by political upheaval; of her high school years in Vienna facing the trials of adolescence far from her family; of her homecoming—both sweet and terrible; and, finally, of her self-imposed exile from her beloved homeland. It is the chronicle of a girlhood and adolescence at once outrageous and familiar, a young life entwined with the history of her country yet filled with the universal trials and joys of growing up.