



AUTUMN

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



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The Guardian's Guide to Putting Your Phone Down and Reading More

Last week, Sir Jonathan Bate, a professor of English literature at Oxford University, voiced his concerns that students' attention spans were suffering 'attrition.' In addition, a study in July by UK charity The Reading Agency found that only half of UK adults read regularly for pleasure. With these facts in mind, *The Guardian* consulted reading experts to find out the best ways to put our phones down and get back into reading. Read the original article by Sarah Phillips [here](#).

1. Keep your phone as far away as possible – Tanya Goodin, a digital detox campaigner, points to research into what happens to our problem-solving ability and IQ when we have our phones in close proximity: "It has been shown that only when our device is in a different room do we really have the full ability to focus."

2. Read physical books and make notes – Handling a physical book can "give you a dopamine hit more than a screen". Author Damian Barr recommends carrying a book at all times. Lara Feigel, professor at King's College London recommends making notes by hand in physical books. (N.B. this refers to books you own personally, not library books!)

3. Retrain your brain – Author Daisy Buchanan says "reading is a marathon, not a sprint... Like exercise, reading came naturally to us as children, but we have acquired a lot of noise and distraction. Start with the smallest amount of time you can and build it back up again."

4. Work out your optimum time and place to read – Find the place where you feel you can read the most easily, whether this is somewhere you feel relaxed, or somewhere you feel productive – whatever works best for you. It's also beneficial to work out which time of day you feel able to read the most at. For many people this is just before sleep.

5. Don't treat reading as if it's a chore – Daisy Buchanan says, "Important books are the goal not the starting point... You need to begin with books for pleasure and joy in order to work up to things that really challenge you."

6. Don't forget audiobooks (and good TV) – Damian Barr says, "Feel good about what you do read, not bad about what you don't. It is about the quality of the storytelling. An incredible box set like the West Wing with astonishing dialogue and characterisation is going to feed the story needs of your heart and brain." Tanya Goodin adds that an audiobook is great when you're multitasking but recommends turning notifications off while you're listening.

2024 Diverse Book Award Winners Announced

This year, The Diverse Book Awards, created by award-winning author Abiola Bello and award-winning publicist Helen Lewis are celebrating their fifth anniversary. The awards were created to highlight the best of the diverse voices published in the UK & Ireland. The 2024 Best Children's Book went to *Steady for This* by Nathanael Lessore; The 2024 Best Young Adult Book went to *The First Move* by Jenny Ireland, and the 2024 Best Adult Book went to *Maame* by Jessica George (with *Small Worlds* by Caleb Nelson coming second). *Boy Like Me* by Simon James Green won the Reader's Choice YA Award. Click [here](#) to see the full list of winners.

The First Move by Jenny Ireland

Juliet believes girls like her - girls with arthritis - don't get their own love stories. She exists at the edges of her friends' social lives, skipping parties to play online chess under a pseudonym with strangers around the world. There, she isn't just 'the girl with crutches'. Ronan is the new kid: good looking, smart, a bad boy plagued by guilt over what happened to his brother Cianan. Chesslife is his escape; there, he's not just 'the boy with the brother'. Juliet thinks Ronan thinks someone like Ronan could never be interested in someone like her - and she wouldn't want him to be anyway because he always acts like he's cooler than everyone else. Whereas, Ronan thinks life is already too complicated for dating and just wants to keep his head down at school.



Small Worlds by Caleb Azumah Nelson (Recommended for Older Readers)

The one thing that can solve Stephen's problems is dancing. Dancing at Church, with his parents and brother, the shimmer of Black hands raised in praise; he might have lost his faith, but he does believe in rhythm. Dancing with his friends, somewhere in a basement with the drums about to drop, while the DJ spins garage cuts. Dancing with his band, making music which speaks not just to the hardships of their lives, but the joys too. Dancing with his best friend Adeline, two-stepping around the living room, crooning and grooving, so close their heads might touch. Dancing alone, at home, to his father's records, uncovering parts of a man he has never truly known. Stephen has only ever known himself in song. But what becomes of him when the music fades? When his father begins to speak of shame and sacrifice, when his home is no longer his own? How will he find space for himself: a place where he can feel beautiful, a place he might feel free? Set over the course of three summers in Stephen's life, from London to Ghana and back again, *Small Worlds* is an exhilarating and expansive novel about the worlds we build for ourselves, the worlds we live, dance and love within.

Steady for This by Nathanael Lessore

Shaun (aka MC Grows) is ready to drop his best bars and smash the competition at Raptology. That way, he's convinced Tanisha, his crush, will finally give him a chance. But when a livestream practice goes epically wrong, Grows' dirty laundry is literally exposed. He's finally achieved his dreams of going viral - not in the good way. Now Tanisha won't look at him, he's the joke of the school and there's no way he can show his face at the competition. Will he ever catch a break? Then a new girl on the block appears who might be just the friend Grows needs. Especially when she points out that Raptology could be the answer to his problems after all...



Boy Like Me by Simon James Green

It's 1994 and thanks to Section 28, there can be no mention of gay relationships in schools. When a school librarian leads Jamie to a disguised novel in the library that reflects his own confused feelings towards boys, he notices that he's not the only one who has checked the book out. In the margins of the pages, he and another student start to leave messages for each other, and Jamie starts to believe that he's not alone... and maybe also has a shot at finding love. That is, until the secret novel is discovered by the head teacher and all hell breaks loose.

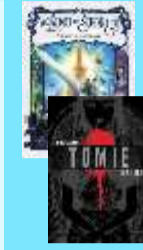


"There is no surer foundation for a beautiful friendship than a mutual taste in literature." —P.G. Wodehouse



The Reappearance of Rachel Price by Holly Jackson

18-year-old Bel has lived her whole life in the shadow of her mom's mysterious disappearance. Sixteen years ago, Rachel Price vanished, and young Bel was the only witness, but she has no memory of it. Rachel is gone, long presumed dead, and Bel wishes everyone would just move on. But the case is dragged up from the past when the Price family agree to a true crime documentary. Bel can't wait for filming to end, for life to go back to normal. And then the impossible happens. Rachel Price reappears, and life will never be normal again. Rachel has an unbelievable story about what happened to her. Unbelievable, because Bel isn't sure it's real. If Rachel is lying, then where has she been all this time? And — could she be dangerous? With the cameras still rolling, Bel must uncover the truth about her mother, and find out why Rachel Price really came back from the dead...



The Land of Stories #6: Worlds Collide by Chris Colfer

In the highly anticipated conclusion to the *Land of Stories* series, Conner and Alex must brave the impossible. All of the *Land of Stories* fairy tale characters—heroes and villains—are no longer confined within their world! With mayhem brewing in the Big Apple, Conner and Alex will have to win their biggest battle yet. Can the twins restore order between the human and fairy tale world? Breath-taking action mixed with laugh out loud moments and lots of heart will make this a gripping conclusion for many fans!

Tomie by Junji Ito (Recommended for Older Readers)

Tomie Kawakami is a femme fatale with long black hair and a beauty mark just under her left eye. She can seduce nearly any man, and drive them to murder as well, even though the victims is often Tomie herself. While one lover seeks to keep her for himself, another grows terrified of the immortal succubus. But soon they realize that no matter how many times they kill her, the world will never be free of Tomie.

Yuzu the Pet Vet: Volume 3 by Mingo Ito

Every day is a learning experience for 11-year-old Yuzu. Between visiting her mom at the hospital, and helping out at her uncle's animal hospital, she's starting to get the hang of what it means to care! This time Yuzu meets a pup that goes from spoiled to smart, as well as a super-smiley therapy dog. She also discovers how hard it is to adjust to new siblings -- fuzzy or otherwise! Later, after meeting an elderly cat, Yuzu learns what "quality of life" is, and just how important it is to listen to what our pets tell us.



Given: Volume 3 by Natsuki Kizu

Uenoyama realizes he's in love with Mafuyu and steals a kiss from him backstage at their first live performance. But now he's even more confused—he hasn't shared his feelings with Mafuyu and has no idea how Mafuyu feels about him. In contrast to their naive romance, Haruki has been harboring a secret desire for bandmate Akihiko, who's already entangled in an intense, conflicted relationship with someone else.

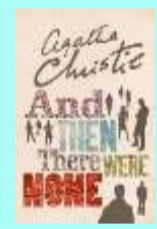


Stephen King: Books of My Life

In early October, *The Guardian* asked super-famous author Stephen King to list some of the most important books he's ever read: those that have shaped his mind and made him who he is today. Below are the books he mentioned that we have in the library stock. And then *There Were None* by Agatha Christie was King's favourite book growing up because "it is the perfect whodunnit." *Lord of the Flies* by William Golding is featured twice on King's list: as the book that changed him as a teenager, and the book that made him want to be a writer. He said of the book: I was totally invested, totally there. You know the way kids were about *Harry Potter* at the height of the craze? That was me with Ralph and Jack." The full *Guardian* article can be found [here](#).



'My Favourite Book Growing Up': And Then There Were None by Agatha Christie
First, there were ten—a curious assortment of strangers summoned as weekend guests to a little private island off the coast of Devon. Their host, an eccentric millionaire unknown to all of them, is nowhere to be found. All that the guests have in common is a wicked past they're unwilling to reveal—and a secret that will seal their fate. For each has been marked for murder. A famous nursery rhyme is framed and hung in every room of the mansion. When they realize that murders are occurring as described in the rhyme, terror mounts. One by one they fall prey. Before the weekend is out, there will be none. Who has choreographed this dastardly scheme? And who will be left to tell the tale? Only the dead are above suspicion.



'The Book That Changed Me as a Teenager' and 'The Book That Made Me Want to be a Writer': Lord of the Flies by William Golding
At the dawn of the next world war, a plane crashes on an uncharted island, stranding a group of schoolboys. At first, with no adult supervision, their freedom is something to celebrate; this far from civilization the boys can do anything they want. Anything. They attempt to forge their own society, failing, however, in the face of terror, sin and evil. And as order collapses, as strange howls echo in the night, as terror begins its reign, the hope of adventure seems as far from reality as the hope of being rescued. Labelled a parable, an allegory, a myth, a morality tale, a parody, a political treatise, even a vision of the apocalypse, *Lord of the Flies* is perhaps our most memorable novel about "the end of innocence, the darkness of man's heart."



'The Writer Who Changed My Mind': The Grapes of Wrath by John Steinbeck
First published in 1939, Steinbeck's Pulitzer Prize-winning epic of the Great Depression chronicles the Dust Bowl migration of the 1930s and tells the story of one Oklahoma farm family, the Joads—driven from their homestead and forced to travel west to the promised land of California. Out of their trials and their repeated collisions against the hard realities of an America divided into Haves and Have-Nots evolves a drama that is intensely human yet majestic in its scale and moral vision, elemental yet plainspoken, tragic but ultimately stirring in its human dignity. A portrait of the conflict between the powerful and the powerless, of one man's fierce reaction to injustice, and of one woman's stoical strength, the novel captures the horrors of the Great Depression and probes into the very nature of equality and justice in America. At once a naturalistic epic, captivity narrative, road novel, and transcendental gospel, Steinbeck's powerful landmark novel is perhaps the most American of American Classics.



The Inaugural Scholastic Graphic Novel Prize Winner & External Competition

This year's winner:

The Scholastic Graphic Novel Prize recognizes the favourite graphic novels in the UK and Ireland. This year's winning entry in the Graphic Novels for Teens category is *Heartstopper Volume 5* by Alice Oseman.

External Competition:

Shortlisted authors and illustrators for The Scholastic Graphic Novel Prize have provided prompts to inspire young people to create their own graphic novel page. Participants can choose a prompt [here](#) and use this as inspiration to design a page of graphic novel panels. Submissions must be emailed to graphicnovelprize@scholastic.co.uk. Make sure to include your name, age, and chosen prompt clearly. The prize has three age categories: 6–8-year-olds, 9–12-year-olds, and teens. The deadline for entries is 11:59pm on Friday 2nd February 2024. Winning submissions will receive the Graphic Novel Prize shortlist and over £100 in stationery from Stabulo.



Click [here](#) to view the rest of the Scholastic Graphic Novel Prize winners.

Heartstopper Volume 5 by Alice Oseman

Boy meets boy. Boys become friends. Boys fall in love. The bestselling LGBTQ+ graphic novel about life, love, and everything that happens in between: this is the fifth volume of the much-loved *Heartstopper* series. Nick and Charlie are very much in love. They've finally said those three little words, and Charlie has almost persuaded his mum to let him sleep over at Nick's house... But with Nick going off to university next year, is everything about to change? By Alice Oseman, winner of the YA Book Prize, *Heartstopper* encompasses all the small moments of Nick and Charlie's lives that together make up something larger, which speaks to all of us.



National Frankenstein Friday



National Frankenstein Friday, held on the last Friday in October, celebrates Mary Shelley and her novel *Frankenstein, or The Modern Prometheus*, featuring the infamous Victor Frankenstein and his monster. Originating in the 1800s, the story follows Victor Frankenstein, who creates a living being. The novel was first published anonymously in 1818 and quickly sold out, with many attributing the novel to Mary Shelley's poet husband Percy Bysshe Shelley. Mary published later editions under her own name, with the 1831 version being the most recognized today. The franchise has inspired over 60 film adaptations, starting with the 1910 version by Edison Studios. In some places, Frankenstein Day is observed on the August 30th, Mary Shelley's birthday. To celebrate, participants can share ideas on social media using the hashtag #FrankensteinFriday and enjoy classic scary or speculative reads like *The Handmaid's Tale* by Margaret Atwood and *Dracula* by Bram Stoker.

Frankenstein by Mary Shelley

Frankenstein is the classic gothic horror novel which has thrilled and engrossed readers for two centuries. Written by Mary Shelley, it is a story which she intended would "curdle the blood and quicken the beatings of the heart." The tale is a superb blend of science fiction, mystery and thriller. Victor Frankenstein driven by the mad dream of creating his own creature, experiments with alchemy and science to build a monster stitched together from dead remains. Once the creature becomes a living breathing articulate entity, it turns on its maker and the novel darkens into tragedy. The reader is very quickly swept along by the force of the elegant prose, the grotesque, surreal imagery, and the multi-layered themes in the novel. Although first published in 1818, Shelley's masterpiece still maintains a strong grip on the imagination and has been the inspiration for numerous horror movies, television and stage adaptations.



On This Day in History... The Birth of P.G. Wodehouse, 15th October 1881

Sir Pelham Grenville Wodehouse, better known as P.G. Wodehouse, was one of the most widely read writers of humour of the 20th century. Over his lifetime, Wodehouse penned more than ninety books, forty plays, and two hundred short stories. Among his most popular creations were English gentleman Bertie Wooster, and his valet Jeeves. Over time Jeeves became known as a caricature of the quintessential English butler, inspiring many similar characters as well as an early Internet search engine, Ask Jeeves (now ask.com). In his prime, Wodehouse would produce a novel in approximately three months, slowing down in his old age to produce two novels a year. Wodehouse passed away in 1975 at the age of 93. Following his death, an obituarist for *The Times* wrote of the author, "[he] was a comic genius recognized in his lifetime as a classic and an old master of farce". Wodehouse's biographer Richard Vorhees wrote that it was "abundantly clear that Wodehouse is one of the funniest and most productive men who ever wrote in English."



Thank You, Jeeves by P.G. Wodehouse

Bertram Wooster's interminable banjolele playing has driven Jeeves, his otherwise steadfast gentleman's gentleman, to give notice. The foppish aristocrat cannot survive for long without his Shakespeare-quoting and problem-solving valet, however, and after a narrowly escaped forced marriage, a cottage fire, and a great butter theft, the celebrated literary odd couple are happy to return to the way things were.



Jeeves in the Offing by P.G. Wodehouse

Jeeves is on holiday in Herne Bay, and while he's away the world caves in on Bertie Wooster. For a start, he's astonished to read in *The Times* of his engagement to the mercurial Bobbie Wickham. Then at Brinkley Court, his Aunt Dahlia's establishment, he finds his awful former headmaster in attendance ready to award the prizes at Market Snodsbys Grammar School. And finally, the Brinkley butler turns out for reasons of his own to be Bertie's nemesis in disguise, the brain surgeon Sir Roderick Rossop. With all occasions informing against him, Bertie has to hitchhike it to Herne Bay to liberate Jeeves from his shrimping net. And after that, the fun really starts.



Carry On, Jeeves by P.G. Wodehouse

From the moment Jeeves cures Bertie Wooster of a raging hangover with his own concoction of Worcestershire sauce and tomato juice, they become steadfast partners. Whether it is fixing a plan-gone-wrong, or solving his friends' love lives, Jeeves is Bertie's unfaltering aide through a series of entirely self-imposed misadventures.



The Inimitable Jeeves by P.G. Wodehouse

God's in his heaven and all's right with the world that's what Wooster thinks but things start going wrong. Bingo Little, needs Bertie to put in a good word for him with his uncle. Bingo is in love with Mabel, a waitress, but fears his uncle won't approve of her. Jeeves suggests a plan using romance novels to sway Bingo's uncle.

