

MECE Reading Newsletter



“Read, read, read. Read everything - Trash, classics, good and bad, and see how they do it. Just like a carpenter who works as an apprentice and studies the master. Read! You'll absorb it.

Then write. If it's good, you'll find out. If it's not, throw it out of the window.”

— William Faulkner

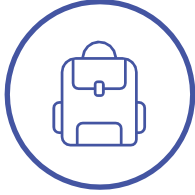


Upcoming:

Year 7 reading
Drop Everything and Read
PPEs
Tutor Reading

“A reader lives a thousand lives before he dies . . . The man who never reads lives only one.”

George R.R. Martin



Reading Opportunities

Year 7 Reading Mentors

A new program has been launched in which some top set Year 9s have been reading with Year 7s in order to improve their comprehension and to become more confident in reading aloud. Once a week the students get together and the Year 7s read a selected book and despite being a relatively new program there has been a definite improvement.

Tutor reading

My tutor is currently reading 'The Other Side of the Truth' by Beverley Naidoo. It follows the story of two children, Sade and Femi. After their mother is murdered because of their father's journalism, the two children are forced to flee. Will they be able to adjust to their new home and bring justice to their father before he is hunted down by the government?

I think that tutor reading is a good opportunity for us to widen our learning about real world topics such as refugees outside of lessons.

Year 9 PPEs

This term year 9s had their first taste of a GCSE paper called PPEs. This included an English paper where students wrote a comparison essay about a given poem from the AQA 'Power and Conflict Anthology' and a poem which they chose. This term we have been learning how to annotate analyse poems surrounding the topic of power and conflict which encompasses key ideas such as war, humanity vs nature and PTSD. We sat the PPEs as though they were our real GCSEs which will help us to be comfortable when we take the real exams. We worked in test conditions for 50 minutes as we wrote. Overall, I think many people found it a helpful opportunity.



Drop Everything and Read

Drop Everything and Read

Drop Everything and Read is a convenient opportunity for students to pick up a good book and read when they may not ordinarily find time in their busy days.

It also lets us have a taster of a different book which we may not have otherwise chosen if we didn't have twenty minutes to try it out.

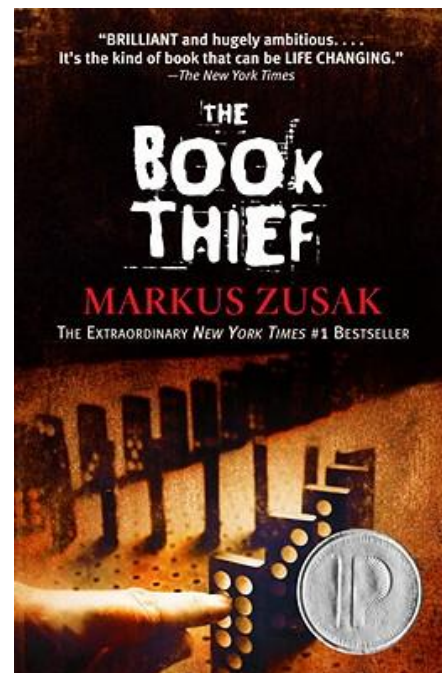
It is a great method to encourage reading in the school environment.

This term we had an English lesson where we went to the library and read silently for an hour. It was a serene break from regular lessons and gave us all a chance to read despite having a packed schedule.

Book Reviews

The Book Thief

The Book Thief is a unique and moving story about a young girl called Leisel in Nazi Germany during WW2 narrated from the perspective of death. The book recounts her life and her experiences with a new family and harbouring a young Jewish man in their basement. This book has a devastating but great ending and some insightful moments.



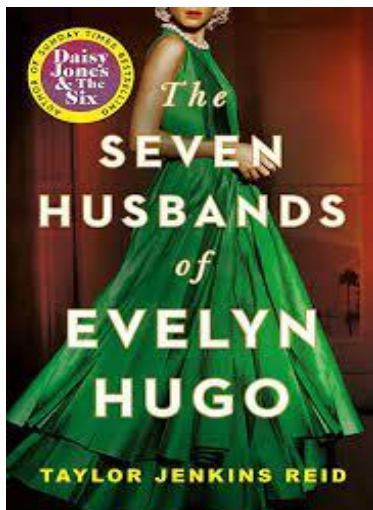
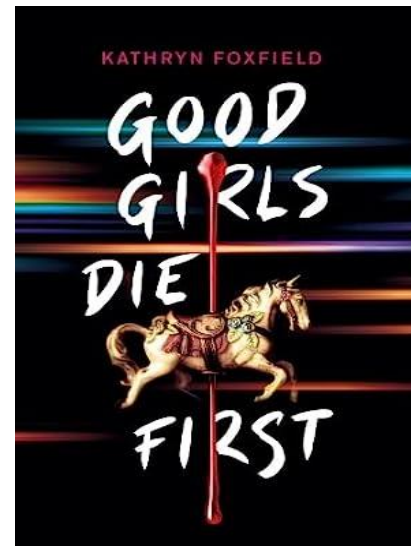
Book Recommendations



Our Reading Ambassador's current favourite books and why you should read them.

Good Girls Die First

GGDF is a mystery thriller book about a group of teenagers. They are blackmailed and find themselves lured to an abandoned carnival, but as the night goes on, they discover more supernatural forces are at play. I read this book in one sitting as I was so hooked. Each character had their own secrets which left me intrigued but the horror elements also gave me goosebumps. I would absolutely recommend this book to YA horror fans!



The Seven Husbands of Evelyn Hugo

This book was an enjoyable and easy read following the life of Hollywood star Evelyn Hugo and her glamorous and scandalous life. It explains her story from moving to LA in the 50s and becoming a star, to her eventual retirement in the 80s and most importantly the seven husbands she had along the way!

It is one of my favourite books and I couldn't put it down until I finished it in one night.

Subject Spotlight

A look at some of the best pieces of work from different subjects across the school

Drama

Can performance and theatre change society?

I think theatre can change society because it is a useful tool to spread awareness and motivate change. Theatre is a fantastic means to spread powerful messages in an easy to digest way, like the play 'Cookies' which covers themes like radicalisation, gang violence and racism. This play is targeted towards teenagers to push them in the right direction and become aware of dangers, with the aim of keeping them safe in the future which is the kind of change that positively impacts society. People are often naive to such issues so theatre is a useful form of education on the matter for those who don't have the time or make the effort to properly research. If a performance grows big in the western world it will eventually spread and influence people's opinions which can lead to change on a larger scale. Even if the world is not changed from the impact of a movie, it will impact the individual viewer, making them feel the emotions that the film makers were trying to convey.

Another example of theatre changing society is the theatre practitioner Augusto Boal and his work in Brazil throughout the late 50s and early 60s. He initially introduced a new form of theatre in which members of the audience were able to stop the play and suggest various actions and emotions for the characters, who were often facing oppression. This process evolved even further when a woman was frustrated that the actor wasn't doing it properly, so she came on stage to demonstrate; this soon became a new normal during his plays. However, Augusto's plays went against establishment and their growing popularity was perceived as a threat, so he was kidnapped off the street, arrested, and brutally assaulted. He was then exiled because the theatre he created had such a big impact that threatened change with the established rules of Brazilian society.

However, other people may argue that theatre isn't widespread enough and therefore it cannot affect society. This is valid because it is hard to make a change when not enough people are going to the theatre and therefore are not privy to the message trying to be conveyed. It is also clear that in less developed countries, that perhaps need the most influence theatre isn't as important because there are a lack of resources and people do not have the time for entertainment like plays and movies. Many people tend to forget about movies after a while and don't enjoy going to the theatre because performance doesn't mean that much to them so it is unlikely that those individuals will be swayed by it enough to make changes like some others would be.

In conclusion, I believe theatre has the potential to make a big change because it has the power to influence people. There are some drawbacks and doubts about this, but I believe that the pros outweigh the cons as performance has an effect on people which will lead towards change.

Subject Spotlight

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English

A look at some preparation a Year 9 student did for a comparison paragraph for the Power and Conflict Anthology:

Big Idea	Remains	War photographer
PTSD	"And the drinks and drugs won't flush him out- he's here in my head when I close my eyes"	"He remembers the cries of this man's wife"
Graphic violence	"Tosses his guts into his body"	"Fields which don't explode beneath the feet of running children in nightmare heat"
Sense of duty	"I walk over it week after week"	"Belfast, Beirut, Phnom Penh" "Sought approval without words to do what someone must"
Guilt	"His bloody life in my bloody hands"	"His hands, which did not tremble then, though seem to now."

How is power and conflict presented in 'Remains' and 'War Photographer'?

Both poems convey a sense of duty despite the horrific imagery and the impact on the narrator's mental health. In 'Remains' you see the soldier patrolling "week after week" because it is what he has been trained to do and without him the job wouldn't get done, despite the monotony conveyed by the repetition of "week". This obligation keeps him trapped in his trauma, meaning that he is reliving the events with no chance to heal. "His blood shadow stays on the street" much like how the memory has stained his memory, forever changing who he is as a person and yet he still "patrols" solidifying it further into his mind as it is what needs to be done as he is blinded by loyalty to his country. The same persistence to fulfil his role in society is seen by the 'War Photographer'. "He sought approval without words to do what someone must" in order to give power to "this man's wife" by sharing a story that would previously go untold. In many cases thinking that "someone must" means that but he took action when others couldn't because it is his job and only war photographers can expose their crimes and pass them on.

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English
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Comparison of Exposure and Kamikaze

The structure of 'Exposure' is very different to the structure of 'Kamikaze'. In 'Exposure', Wilfred Owen uses the refrain "But nothing happens," this allows tension to be built up in each stanza only to be crushed by the anticlimax, punctuated by a full stop which creates a blunt ending to the build-up. Wilfred Owen also uses a half-rhyme in a b b c d pattern. This could represent the mental deterioration of the soldiers as they are detached from reality, half of them are tethered to the war whilst the other half are lost in thought and memories of home, warmth and comfort. The half-rhyme could also represent the mental battle between the strict rigidity of the army and the regimented order of being a soldier verses their free will and human nature - knowing it is dangerous, but that they are willing to fight back.

On the other hand, 'Kamikaze' uses no rhyme scheme which mirrors the fact that he wanted to change his behaviour compared to everyone else in society. The poem consists of seven stanzas, each consisting of six lines. This reflects the oath that kamikaze soldiers had to take to show their allegiance to their cause and country as well as the rigid life and conformity. The italics are used to represent the different narratives, one telling the story of the pilot on his journey and the other telling the story of his return and reaction of his family.

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English

A Lot About a Little for a quote from Bayonet Charge

