

First of Its Kind

****Angela Carter, The Bloody Chamber***

These feminist rewritings of classic fairy stories set to rights some of the inbuilt prejudices present in the originals. Great stories too!

Joan Didion, The White Album

Classic essays from one of the English language's great stylists – also one of the first serious reassessments of the impact of social movements in the 1960s.

****Joseph Heller, Catch 22***

Savage and funny satire of World War 2. One of the few books to have its title turned into a much-used phrase.

****Franz Kafka, The Trial***

Weird and wonderful nightmare world from this master of the surreal.

****Jack Kerouac, On the Road***

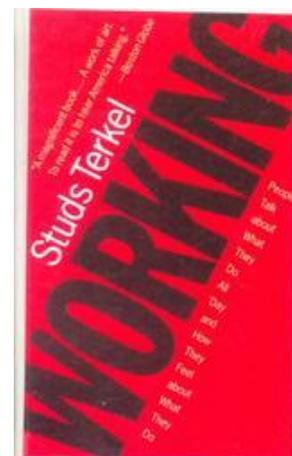
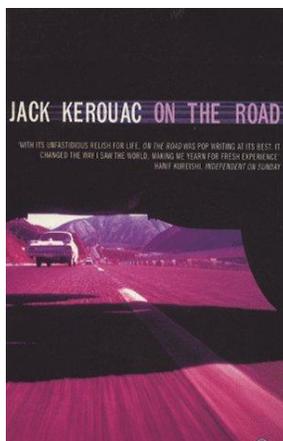
A Beatnik classic, charting the travels across 50s America of a group too hip to hang with the mainstream. Guaranteed to make you yearn for the open road.

****Primo Levi, If I were a Man***

Short stories that manage to maintain an objective tone even though they detail a detainee's experience of the Auschwitz-Buchanwald concentration camp – one of the first works to deal with the Holocaust.

Studs Terkel, Working

Amazing collection of first person accounts of working life, gathered by the legendary Terkel for his radio show. One of a series of books Terkel has produced in this format.



London

**Monica Ali, Brick Lane*

Set in the East End of London, this contemporary novel explores the life of a young Bengali woman in an arranged marriage with a man much older than herself.

**Martin Amis, Money*

Amis at his fiercest and best, in this savage satire of Eighties greed.

**Jake Arnott, The Long Firm*

The first in a trilogy, this novel interweaves four stories set in 60s gangland London, each centring around the psychotic Harry Stark.

Alan Hollinghurst, The Swimming Pool Library

Sexual, social and racial identity in a pre-AIDS, post-colonial world – an eye-opening account of a world rarely glimpsed in fiction.

**Nick Hornby, Fever Pitch*

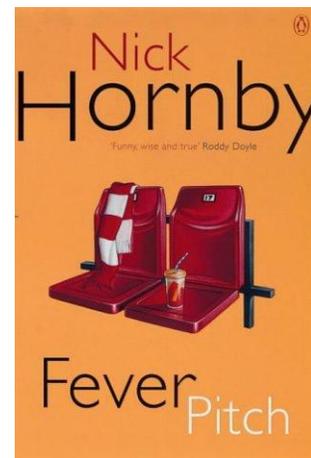
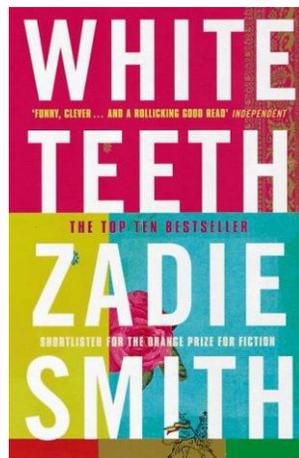
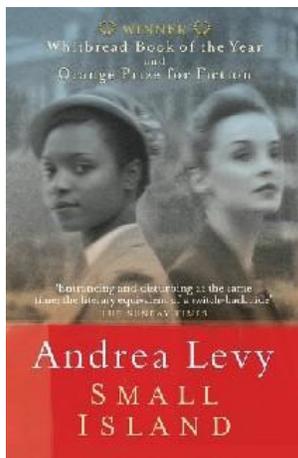
The book that launched the lad-lit genre single-handedly. Constantly imitated but never matched, you don't need to be a Gunner to enjoy this autobiography told through the medium of supporting a football team.

**Andrea Levy, Small Island*

2004's Orange Prize winning novel linking together four London lives, based around a boarding house prepared to take on immigrants from the Caribbean in the racially charged early post-World War 2 years. Great love story too.

**Zadie Smith, White Teeth*

Comic novel about the mixing of racial, social and religious identities in the melting pot of North London.



Hardboiled

**Raymond Chandler, Farewell My Lovely*

Chandler set the template for contemporary, hard-boiled, literary crime-fiction. His plots are notoriously difficult to follow (sometimes he did not know who did it himself until he reached the final chapter of a book!), but this is possibly the most accessible.

**Ralph Ellison, Invisible Man*

Dark, twisted study of racial oppression in 1950s USA. Powerful, disturbing stuff.

**Jame Ellroy, American Tabloid*

A re-writing of the Kennedy assassination plot and so much more. As the blurb says, 'so hard-boiled it bounces off the sidewalk!'

Dorothy B. Hughes, In a Lonely Place

Classic 50s noir by one of the few women writing in the genre.

**Gerald Kersch, Night and the City*

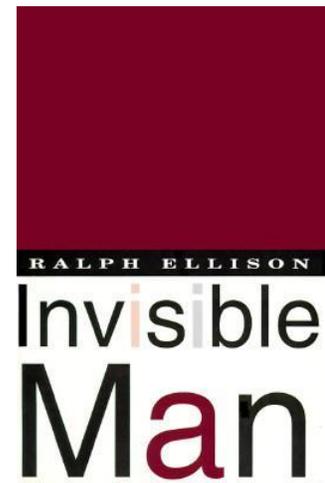
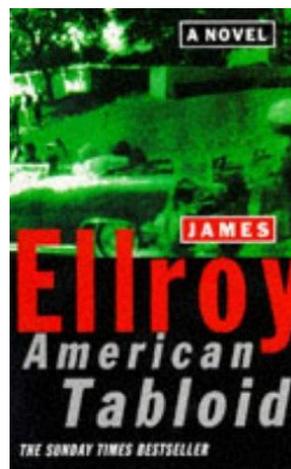
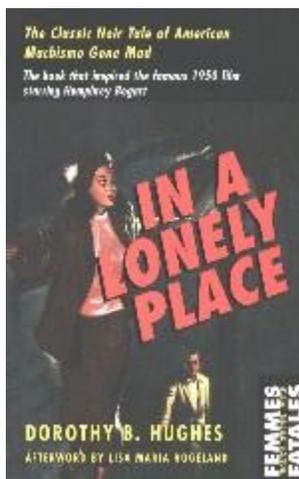
1930s crime novel that shows the Brits could do noir every bit as good as the Yanks. Another great London novel.

Walter Mosley, Always Outnumbered, Always Outgunned

Most famous for his Easy Rawlins crime series, Mosley brings an added complexity and humanity to these short stories based around ex-con philosopher, Socrates Fortlow.

**Jim Thompson, The Killer Inside Me*

The darkest of a very dark writer's novels, this page-turner explores the mind of a twisted, delusional killer.



Twisted

J.G. Ballard, The Atrocity Exhibition

Not Ballard's most accessible work, but one of his most interesting – written in the 1960s, it shows his ability to surf the contemporary world's zeitgeist, in this instance making art from 'car-crash' culture.

**William Burroughs, Naked Lunch*

You won't understand a fraction of this descent into the muddled ramblings of a drug-crazed mind, but you'll have fun trying.

**Bret Easton Ellis, American Psycho*

Not for the faint-hearted. Some find this novel gratuitous, tasteless and sick; others believe it the greatest satire on American life in modern times.

A.M.Homes, The End of Alice

Creepy – and all the creepier because the lead character is a female. A study of a young woman's obsession with boys (she even eats the scabs from their knees!). A.M., by the way, is a woman.

Stephen King (writing as Richard Bachman), The Long Walk

Near future America is an overpopulated dystopia and the ultimate pastime is watching an annual walk by 100 boys. Sound dull? Wait until the competitors drop below 4mph once too often.

Cormac McCarthy, Blood Meridian

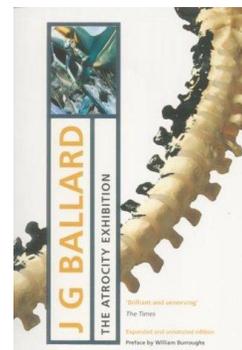
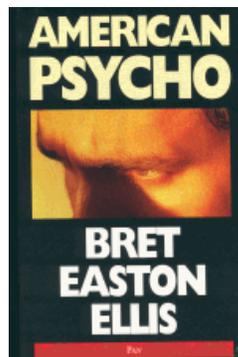
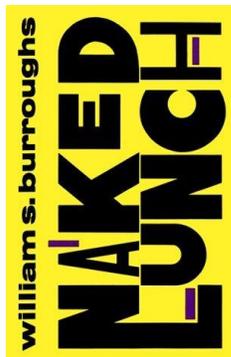
Twisted rewriting of the American West that created a whole new genre: Western (Biblical) splatter-punk noir! Read it if you dare.

George Sanders, Pastoralia

This man sure knows how to write a weird story. Compelling satires on contemporary alienation, including the title story where humans are exhibits in a theme park.

**Will Self, Quantity Theory of Insanity*

Off-the-wall short stories from one of the Britain's finest experimental writers.



Page turner

Bill Bryson, The Lost Continent

First travel book from the master of the comic form: a wry look at the parts of the USA generally ignored by mainstream media outlets.

Suzanne Berne, A Crime in the Neighbourhood

Adult narrator, Marsha, looks back on her childhood and specifically to a murder in 1973. The murder, it seems, was not the only crime committed at that time.

**F. Scott Fitzgerald, The Great Gatsby*

Gatsby, the greatest fraud in literature. An expose of the myth behind the American Dream.

Patricia Highsmith, The Talented Mr Ripley

The first of the Ripley books, chronicling the adventures of enigmatic fraudster, Tom Ripley. Classic crime.

Peter Hoeg, Borderliners

Dystopian school story – three damaged children upset the mechanisms of a radical experiment at school.

**Chloe Hooper, A Child's Book of True Crime*

Tasmanian schoolteacher has an affair with the father of one of her pupils and becomes increasingly paranoid as events unravel.

Zora Neale Hurston, Their Eyes Were Watching God

Hurston was a forerunner of African-American writers such as Alice Walker and Toni Morrison. Here she chronicles the complicated love life of Janie Crawford.

**Harper Lee, To Kill a Mocking Bird*

Classic tale of justice in the racially charged Deep South. As the blurb says, over 30 million copies of the book have sold worldwide.

**Yann Mantell, Life of Pi*

A fantastic yarn about a boy ship-wrecked with only a tiger and a zebra for company. A book that leaves you asking as many questions as it answers.

**Jed Mercurio, Bodies*

You might have seen the TV series of the same name. If you did, you know what to expect: compelling and horrifying tales of medical incompetence!

Bharati Mukherjee, Jasmine

Global escapades of a young Indian woman.

Julie Myerson, Something Might Happen

Atmospheric aftermath of a sudden, unexplained murder set on the Suffolk coast.

John Ngugi, A Grain of Wheat

Compelling story of Kenya on the threshold of independence.

Maggie O'Farrell, My Lover's Lover

Upmarket chick-lit from local author and partner of another author on this list, William Sutcliffe.

ZZ Packer, Drinking Coffee Elsewhere

Engaging debut short story collection from young female author exploring African American identity.

**Phillip Pullman, Northern Lights Trilogy*

This trilogy – a fantasy epic – is so good it has reawakened thousands to reading.

Ruth Rendell, A Judgment in Stone

Classic tale from the classic crime writer. In this clever inversion of the traditional murder thriller, you are told the murderer's identity in the first sentence.

**Arundhati Roy, The God of Small Things*

Beautiful and evocative story bringing to life Kerala in Southern India.

Lionel Schriver, We Need to Talk About Kevin

A mother writes a series of letters to her estranged husband examining feelings for her son, Kevin, perpetrator of a Columbine-style school massacre. Prize winning portrayal of one of the last taboos: a mother who does not love her son.

**Vikram Seth, A Suitable Boy*

An enormous novel, often sold in 3 volumes, chronicling family life in India. Can you lift it, let alone read it?

William Sutcliffe, Are You Experienced?

Page-turning satire of the back-packing experience by the local author of a Burghley Year 9 class reader, Bad Influence.

**Donna Tartt, A Secret History*

Literary and classy crime thriller set around a US university campus.

John Updike, Rabbit Run

The first in a legendary series of four Rabbit books – here Rabbit Angstrom discovers that his life, at 26, is pretty messed up. The other books in the quartet deal successively with Angstrom at 36, 46 and 56.

Louise Welch, The Cutting Room

Slick, dark thriller set in modern Glasgow around the 'snuff-porn' trade, but without any prurient indulgence.

A Modern Take on the Past

**Pat Barker, Regeneration*

Barker produces her own take on the life of First World War Poets recuperating in a hospital for officers – so authentic it could have been written by one of the poets himself.

Ronan Bennett, Havoc in its Third Year

Unputdownable – while the book is set in the 1600s, just before the English Revolution, its themes are highly relevant to the modern age, the chief one being an exploration of religious intolerance and the dangers of mixing religion and politics.

Charles Frazier, Cold Mountain

Romantic US Civil War epic turned into the hit movie, starring Jude Law and Rene Zellweger.

**Thomas Kenneally, Schindler's Ark (List)*

Meticulously researched account written by the descendant of a Holocaust survivor – made into the Oscar winning Spielberg film.

Tomasi de Lampedusa, The Leopard

Stunning fictional account of the transition in Sicily from monarchy to bourgeois democracy.

**Toni Morrison, Beloved*

Nobel prize winner's most famous book: escaped slave, Sethe, struggles to deal with the story of her life, including the death of her baby, whose tomb is inscribed with the single word, Beloved.

Joyce Carol Oates, Black Water

Prolific American writer delivers her take on the younger Kennedy brother, Teddy, and what might have happened when a car he was driving crashed into a river, killing a young woman.

Philip Roth, The Plot Against America

Roth writes one of the meanest sentences in the English language and this novel sure strings a few together. Projection of an alternative America under ace-pilot and fascist, Charles Lindbergh, rather than President Roosevelt.

**Alice Walker, The Color Purple*

Classic feminist study of racial and sexual identity in the American South.

Sarah Waters, Fingersmith

Melodramatic lesbian Victoriana and gripping suspense in this critique of Victorian moral and sexual hypocrisy.

Gritty

Raymond Carver, Collected Short Stories

Wow! Carver packs as much into a couple of pages as other writers manage in a whole novel. The master of the blue-collar 'dirty-realist' genre.

**Roddy Doyle, The Snapper*

An early offering from the Dublin writer whose work – often comic – portrays Irish working class life.

Tahor Ben Jelloun, This Blinding Absence of Light

Imagine living in an underground prison with no light for over 20 years. It happened in Morocco at the end of the 20th century. This novel is based on the real experiences of one of the few survivors.

James Kelman, The Burn

Without Kelman there would be no Irvine Welsh (Welsh admits as much himself). Kelman's tales of Scottish working class life, though, are so much grittier, so much more real. Harrowing, poignant and moving all at the same time.

Richard Wright, Native Son

Powerful meditation of poverty and hopelessness, following the life of Bigger Thomas, a young black man caught in a downward spiral after he kills a young white woman in a brief moment of panic.

The Future

Margaret Atwood, Oryx and Craic

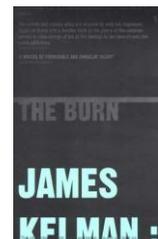
A companion novel to The Handmaid's Tale, the novel offers Atwood's take on the environment – in a future-world.

Philip K. Dick, Time Out of Joint

Dick is most famous for the short story "Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep" that was adapted into the film "Blade Runner". He wrote dozens of short novels too, including this paranoid projection of a seemingly normal existence that is anything but.

**Kurt Vonnegut, Slaughterhouse Five*

Anti-war odyssey through time, centering on the infamous World War 2 firebombing of Dresden.



Heartwarming

**Ed. Paul Auster, True Tales of American Life*

These tales, no longer than 2 sides long, are real-life gems sent in to a radio programme hosted by Auster. Proof that real life is every bit as strange and inventive as fiction.

Alice Hoffman, Seventh Heaven

Inspiring tale of the everyday and the magical in US suburbia.

Barbara Kingsolver, The Poisonwood Bible

Epic account of one family set against the backdrop of the struggle for independence in 1959 Congo.

Ann Patchett, Bel Canto

Unexpected bonds forged between hostages and terrorists at party held by the vice President of a South American country.

**Alice Sebold, The Lovely Bones*

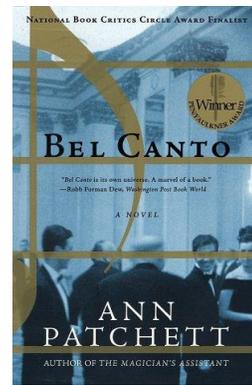
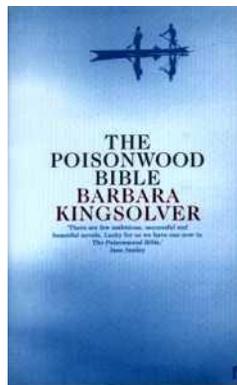
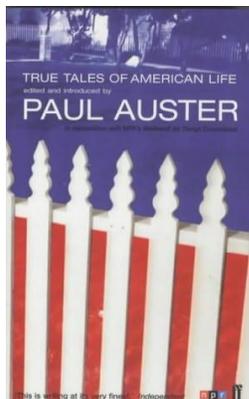
A heartwarming tale, despite being narrated by a murdered girl whose family never discovered how she was killed.

Barbara Trapido, Juggling

Two sisters - one natural, one adopted - engage in a series of trials and love affairs that lead them from strange coincidences into the truth.

Ann Tyler, The Accidental Tourist

Lonely travel writer who hates to travel meets feisty female dog-trainer who transforms his life.



Intellectual

**Paul Auster, New York Trilogy*

Auster's most widely read work offers a postmodern take on detective fiction. Weird, wonderful and compelling.

**Albert Camus, The Outsider*

It all goes a bit French in this existentialist classic, titled L'Etranger in the original. Meursault kills a man, but it seems he is condemned to death not so much for this act as for not crying at his mother's funeral.

Don DeLillo, Underworld

Give yourself a long stretch for this one. DeLillo's 'big book' interweaves several narratives in post-war USA, exploring, like his other books, that everything is connected in some kind of paranoid conspiracy – from baseball to modern art to US fighter jets!

**Jonathan Frantzen, The Corrections*

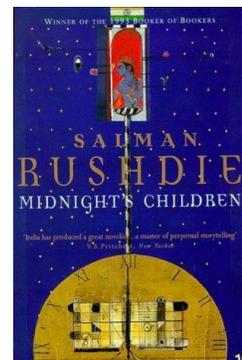
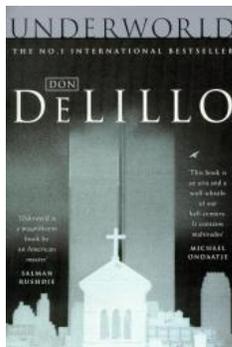
Frantzen's more comic response to DeLillo's Underworld – family saga re-establishing (correcting) where connections lie.

**Milan Kundera, The Unbearable Lightness of Being*

Czech writer's deep blend of philosophy and love set during the period of Communist rule.

**Salman Rushdie, Midnight's Children*

Saleem Sinai is born in 1947 at the precise moment of India's independence. Like other children born at this time he is given magical powers – in his case, an incredible sense of smell. Saleem's up and down life mirrors the ups and downs of post-independence India.



Structure

Julian Barnes, A History of the World in 10½ Chapters

Can this novel really live up to its title's claim? A series of separate but interlinking narratives by one of the most influential English novelists of the 1980s allows you to find out.

**Italo Calvino, If on a Winter's Night a Traveller*

This experiment in different styles and genres has one of the most intriguing and mind-blowing openings to be found anywhere in fiction. Where does the act of writing end and the act of reading begin?

**Jonathan Coe, What a Carve Up!*

Coe is a laugh-out-loud writer, often overlooked by literary prize-givers because, as well as writing serious literary fiction, his work has a sense of fun. This book, with its complex structure, offers a satire on the English class system.

William Goldman, Adventures in the Screen Trade

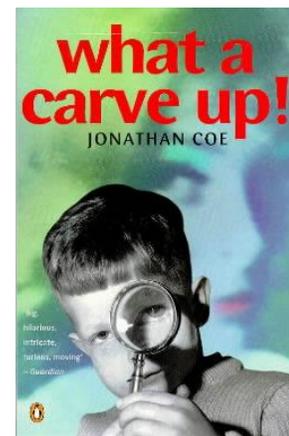
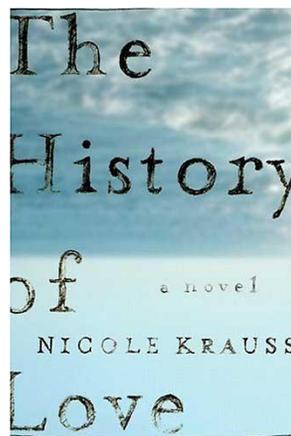
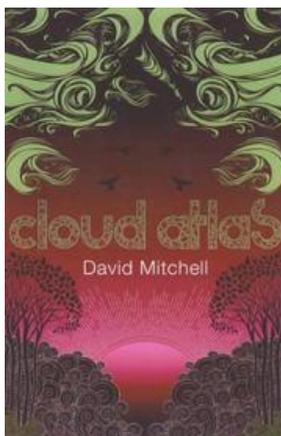
One of the few non-fiction selections, here because as well as being the insider's study on life inside Hollywood, it also offers a master-class on writing – film scripts or otherwise. If this is your thing, there's a sequel – Further Adventures in the Screen Trade

Alison Krauss, The History of Love: A Novel

Densely plotted, containing a book within a book, and narrated by several characters moving back and forth across the globe throughout the 20th century – yet still relatively short and highly readable!

**David Mitchell, Cloud Atlas*

Incredible book! Six separate narratives set in different times and written in different genres somehow form a coherent whole. If that isn't difficult enough, get this: each story ends half way through and is picked up later in the book.



Youth

**Douglas Coupland, Generation X*

Imagine writing a novel that defines an entire generation. Coupland managed it with this, his first novel, an exploration of the lives of a group of friends who need to reinvent the world they live in, in order to escape the excesses of consumption-driven lives.

**Alex Garland, The Beach*

A real page-turner and the first of a spate of books to explore the murkier side of global backpacking.

**William Golding, Lord of the Flies*

Classic story of what boys get up to when plane-wrecked on a desert island and left to their own strange devices.

**Ian McEwan, The Cement Garden*

McEwan's first novel and still a must in the *coming-of-age* genre. Weird, moving and twisted.

**Sylvia Plath, The Bell Jar*

Penetrating insight into the psyche of a talented young woman undergoing a breakdown.

**J.D. Salinger, Catcher in the Rye*

The classic tale of teenage dysfunction, featuring a short period in the life of the ultimate anti-hero, Holden Caulfield.

Alan Warner, Morvern Callar

Strange tale of young woman's life and its twists and turns as she moves between the Scottish islands and Ibiza's rave scene.

**Irvine Welsh, Trainspotting*

A novel that bears no relation to its title, Trainspotting spawned a host of imitators but has never been bettered for its raw, gritty and funny depiction of Edinburgh's working class youth.

Edmund White, A Boy's Own Story

Excellent 'coming out' novel by celebrated American gay writer.

**Jeanette Winterson, Oranges Are Not The Only Fruit*

Young woman rebels against her repressive religious upbringing in exploration of youth and sexuality.

Introduction to 100 Great Reads

Dear Y12 and 13 students (and curious Y10s and 11s),

This booklet has been compiled to give you some guidance in your reading. It contains, as the title suggests, one hundred fantastic books that should inspire you, stimulate you, move you, teach you and just plain blow you away. You should all read some of them and some of you should read all of them. Why? Because reading makes you a better and more interesting person. Fact!

The chief criteria for inclusion in the list is readability. There might be one section entitled *Intellectual*, but the books there still tell mesmerising stories. The books also all come from the 20th and 21st centuries – it was one way of limiting the list in length and I also wanted it to engage more with you and your times. So even some of the older books on the list, such as Kafka's *The Trial* read in a very modern way.

Most of the books are novels, but there is also a smattering of short story collections and non-fiction pieces. Each of the non-fiction texts has a literary pedigree – to go outside of this remit would make a selection criteria too complicated.

The list, like all such lists, is flawed. If you come across anything that you feel must be included, or feel strongly that something should be stripped of the title 'great' forever, then please let me know.

Happy reading!

Miss Kennedy.

ONE HUNDRED GREAT BOOKS

A LIST FOR Y12/13 (AND KEEN
READERS AT KS4)