

Year 10 and 11 Reading List



The twenty books listed here were all published more than a hundred years ago, and yet remain fresh and exhilarating reads.

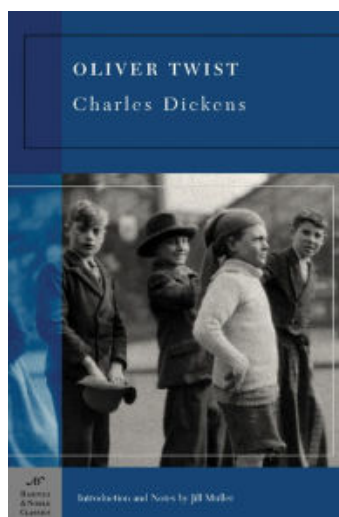
- You should choose one of these books to read for pleasure.
- Your teacher will need to know which book you have selected.

Enjoy reading!

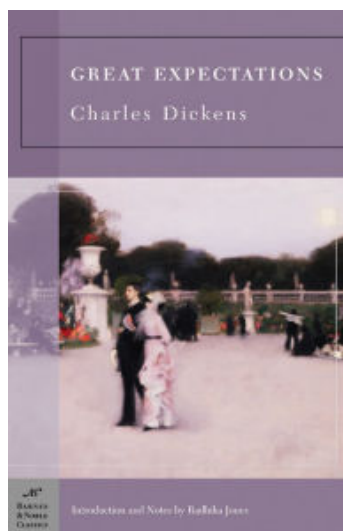
Jane Eyre by Charlotte Brontë



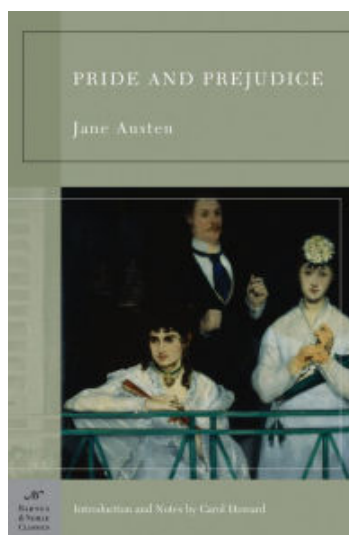
Jane Eyre by Charlotte Brontë—This revolutionary novel is in part responsible for our modern concept of storytelling, as it was the first to delve directly into the inner life of its protagonist. The story is told firmly from Jane’s point of view, embellished, dramatised, and rendered slightly unreal by virtue of her perception, memory, and prejudices. While telling a love story about a complex proto-feminist character, the novel finds time to offer thoughtful critiques of what was then modern life—critiques that still ring true today.



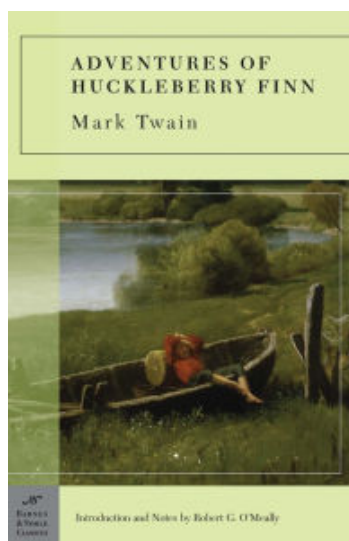
Oliver Twist by Charles Dickens -Dickens' story borders on being an exposé of how orphans were treated in the 19th century, as Oliver Twist's horrible childhood, sale into indentured servitude as an apprentice, and absorption into a criminal gang (led by the iconic Fagin and including the equally iconic Artful Dodger) was all too possible at the time. Dickens combined a bracingly realistic look at criminal life with a satisfyingly happy ending in a book everyone should read at least once in their lives.



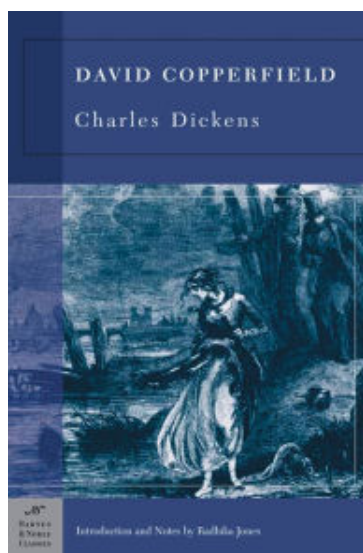
Great Expectations by Charles Dickens-The story of the orphan Pip as he makes his way through his life, from a childhood being brought up "by hand" by his harsh sister and gentle, loving brother-in-law, through his callow young adulthood, covers every aspect of our existence, dealing in universal themes including misplaced gratitude, unrequited love, and regret. It contains some of Dickens' best-known characters, including the tragic Miss Havisham, who perpetually wears her rotting wedding dress after being jilted at the altar.



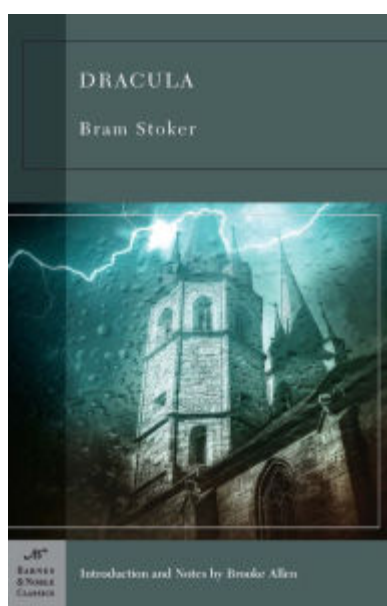
***Pride and Prejudice* by Jane Austen** remains so powerful a template for romance fiction that it is still used as the inspiration for new novels, films, and more to this day. The tale of vivacious Elizabeth Bennet and her unwitting ensnaring of proud, rich Mr. Darcy has launched a million conversations, and contains multiple speeches and lines of dialogue worth memorising.



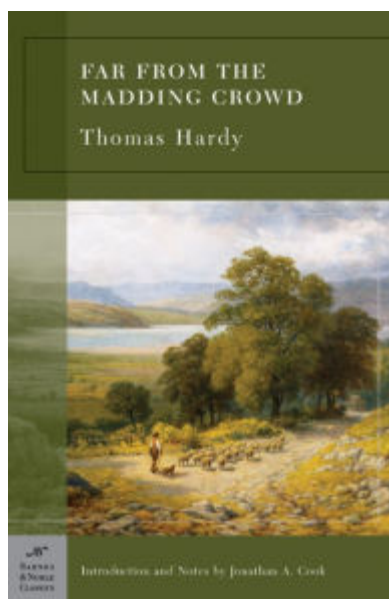
Adventures of Huckleberry Finn by Mark Twain-Mark Twain's novel remain hilarious examples of Americana while carrying potent social commentary, especially concerning race in America—commentary that is still, sadly, applicable. Twain's skill in couching serious criticisms of the world he lived in within an entertaining and engrossing adventure remains unparalleled in American literature.



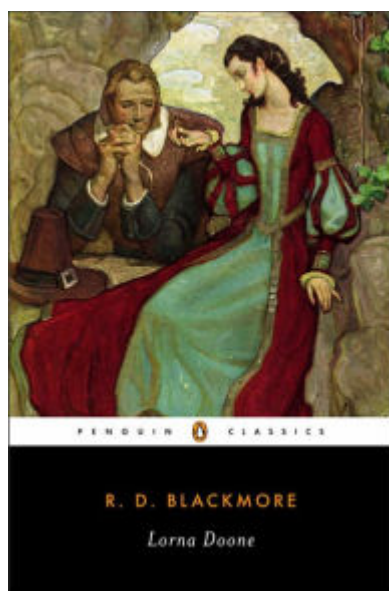
David Copperfield by Charles Dickens-Speaking of Dickens and his dominance of the 19th century book-writing, *David Copperfield* may well be his most beloved novel (it is certainly one of his most adapted). Originally serialized, the story of the titular character's life is largely autobiographical. Not many writers get the chance to fictionalize their own lives in such grand style, and no other Dickens novel exemplifies his wordy, fluid style like this one.



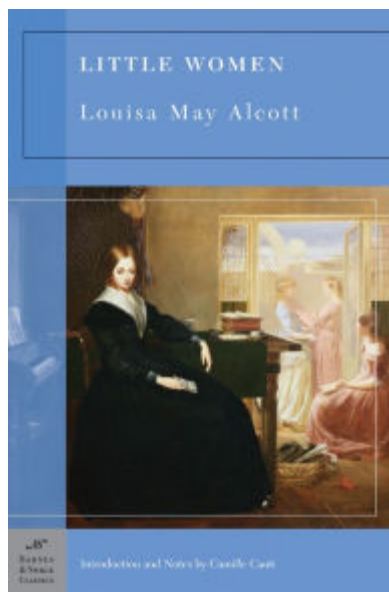
Dracula by Bram Stoker-Bram Stoker's classic novel has been filmed so many times, it is possible some readers do not realize there is a source novel. Stoker's genius is using a series of diary entries and letters (plus a few newspaper clippings filling in background material) to limit the awareness of his characters, thereby heightening tension as the reader realizes they know more than the people they are reading about. The result is an air of claustrophobic, gothic horror that has kept us reading for centuries.



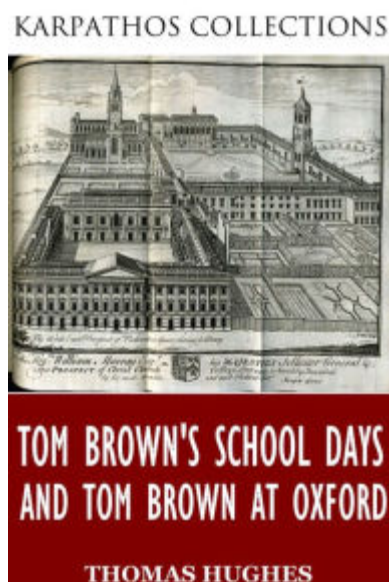
Far from the Madding Crowd by Thomas Hardy-Hardy's best-known novel tells the story of Bathsheba Everdene and Gabriel Oak. Gabriel falls in love with Bathsheba when he is well-off, but she rejects his proposal because she values her independence. As their fortunes wax and wane, Gabriel and Bathsheba remain in each other's lives, dealing with tragedies and mysteries, more or less until Bathsheba has been through enough turmoil to realize that Gabriel is her only true love. Along the way you get to enjoy some of the finest writing the English language has ever produced.



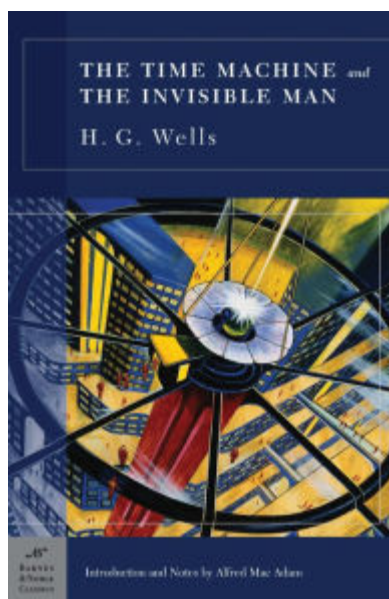
Lorna Doone by RD Blackmore- This classic story set in 17th-century England tells the story of the Doones, a formerly aristocratic family that has devolved into a gang of impoverished criminals. John, a farmer whose father was murdered by the Doones, falls in love with a beautiful girl named Lorna only to discover she is the granddaughter of Sir Ensor Doone. Remarkably, Blackmore perfectly captures the lilt and rhythm of a regional dialect without it becoming distracting or comedic, giving this book a feeling of verisimilitude rarely matched.



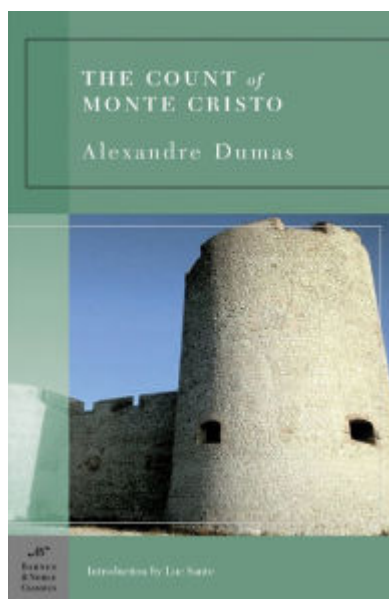
Little Women by Louisa Alcott -it may seem strange today, but the concept of “childhood” as a separate and distinct period of life is pretty recent. Of course, the odds of surviving childhood have greatly improved fairly recently, too, so it’s not entirely surprising. Alcott’s *Little Women* is one of the earliest books to have all the features of young adult fiction: a focus on youthful characters and their struggles, a story that presents an idyllic starting point that becomes complicated by adult concerns, and a realistic approach to the concerns of youth. It is easy to see the seeds of the genre in this wonderful book.



Tom Brown's School Days by Thomas Hughes-The semi-autobiographical story of Tom Brown's experiences at school offers universal themes of childhood and the intimidating, exciting moment when you take those first steps toward independence and adulthood. These themes still resonate, as do the episodes of impish pranks and adventures (including the occasional dorm room explosion).



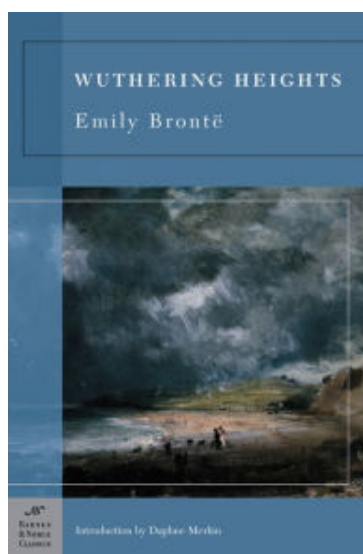
The **Time Machine and The Invisible Man** by **H.G Wells**-Wells' classic sci-fi story remains so modern in execution it is easy to forget it was written more than a century ago, especially since sci-fi to this day continues to explore the narrative possibilities of time travel. Many readers view the ending of the story as being among one of the most chilling sequences in literature.



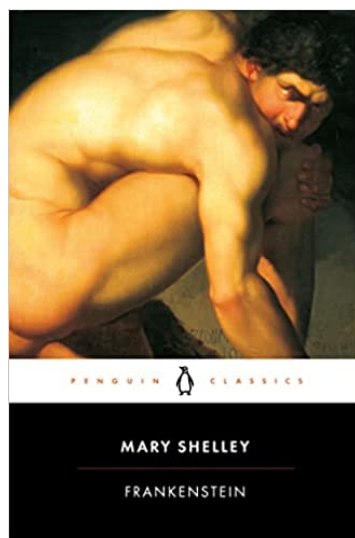
The Count of Monte Cristo by **Alexandre Dumas**- Dumas' classic revenge story is also the ultimate adventure story, centred on a man who is wrongly imprisoned, escapes, makes a fortune, and seeks to get back at his enemies. All of this is set against the backdrop of one of the most politically and militarily unsettled periods of European history—a moment when it seemed literally anything might happen.



Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea by Jules Verne—Sea monsters and what is essentially the first steampunk submarine: it does not get more adventurous than this. Verne’s classic work of adventure and sci-fi is not exactly scientifically rigorous—at one-point Captain Nemo exits his submarine and strolls about on the floor of the ocean without difficulty—but its spirit of discovery as the captain and his companions travel to various incredible places (including the lost city of Atlantis) is unparalleled.



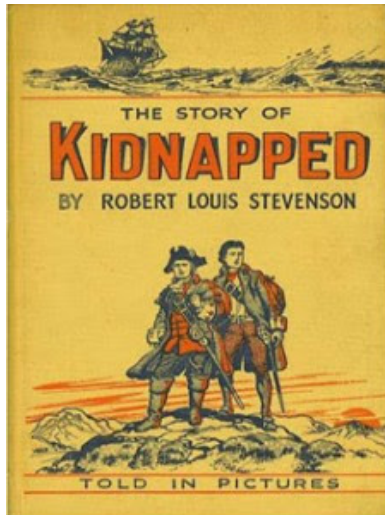
Wuthering Heights by Emily Brontë— Emily Brontë’s only novel is concerned with the destructive power of unbridled emotion, demonstrating how feeling unchecked by reason can distort life and ultimately destroy it. Part romance, part ghost story, *Wuthering Heights* offers one of the best characters ever created in Heathcliff, a shifting character of uncertain parentage and legacy who is ultimately undone by his mad love for foster sister Catherine and taste for vengeance following her death.



Frankenstein by Mary Shelly-Mary Shelley's Frankenstein is one of the masterpieces of nineteenth-century Gothicism. While stay-ing in the Swiss Alps in 1816 with Percy Shelley, Lord Byron, and others, Mary, then eighteen, began to concoct the story of Dr. Victor Frankenstein and the monster he brings to life by electricity. Written in a time of great personal tragedy, it is a subversive and morbid story warning against the dehumanisation of art and the corrupting influence of science.

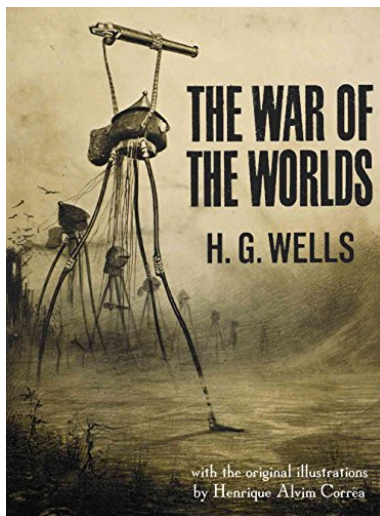


Black Beauty by Anna Sewell (published in 1877)- A young horse experiences both the rough and the refined aspects of nineteenth century England as he is bought and broken, cared for and used up by a series of wonderful and terrible masters. Sewell's only novel published months before her death was an instant success and sparked a whole genre of



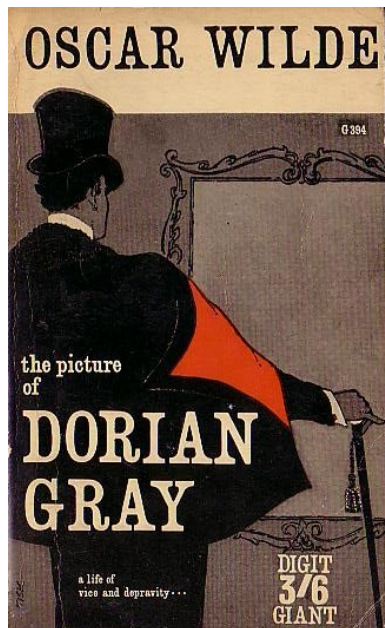
***Kidnapped*, Robert Louis Stevenson**

The original title to this book written for boys gave a little too much away: *Kidnapped: Being Memoirs of the Adventures of David Balfour in the Year 1751: How he was Kidnapped and Cast away; his Sufferings in a Desert Isle; his Journey in the Wild Highlands; his acquaintance with Alan Breck Stewart and other notorious Highland Jacobites; with all that he Suffered at the hands of his Uncle, Ebenezer Balfour of Shaws, falsely so-called: Written by Himself and now set forth by Robert Louis Stevenson. It however was not actually a memoir.*



***The War of the Worlds*, H.G. Wells**

This is considered one of the greatest early science fiction novels. *The War of the Worlds* is a book about alien invasion, but if you dig deeper, you'll find commentary on racism and British imperialism.



The Picture of Dorian Gray, Oscar Wilde

The importance and influence of Wilde's only novel is still very noticeable today. Youth, vanity, art, and society's superficial nature are all explored in this book.