

Reading at TQS

Welcome to the The Quay School Reading Recommendation Newsletter!



This termly reading newsletter is designed to spark curiosity, inspire imagination, and nurture a love for reading among our students, parents, and staff. Whether you're an avid reader looking for your next great book or just starting your reading journey, you'll find something here for every age and interest.

Each edition will feature hand-picked books across various genres, from classics to contemporary must-reads, including fiction, non-fiction, poetry, and graphic novels. We'll also highlight student and teacher recommendations, share tips for fostering reading habits, and keep you updated on exciting local library events.

Happy reading, and let's embark on this literary adventure together! ✨

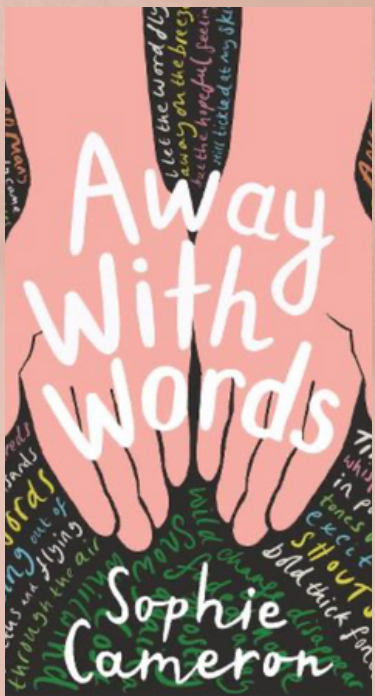
Birdsong by Katya Balen is a beautifully written novel that explores the power of music, nature, and friendship. The story follows Annie, a young girl who has just moved to a new place after an illness that affects her ability to play the flute, her greatest passion. Feeling disconnected from everything she loves, she struggles with her sense of identity and belonging.

When Annie meets a girl named Noah, they form an unexpected bond, strengthened by their shared appreciation for the sounds of nature, particularly birdsong. Through this friendship and her connection to the natural world, Annie begins to heal and rediscover her love for music, finding a new way to express herself.

Katya Balen's poetic prose and sensitivity to emotions make **Birdsong** a touching, heartwarming story about overcoming challenges, the beauty of the world around us, and the healing power of friendship and creativity.



BIRDSONG



Exploring the power of language and the beauty of friendship this heartwarming story of self-discovery follows Gala and Natalie's bond that transcends language barriers. Blending a compelling mystery with a deft and sensitive study of selective mutism, 'Away With Words' is an important book that will challenge perceptions and open young minds. Highly recommended for KS3.

KS3 STUDENT PICK



Crossing the Line by Tia Fisher is a gripping young adult novel that dives deep into the complexities of friendship, loyalty, and the consequences of difficult decisions. The story centers around **Erin** and **Mason**, two best friends with a seemingly unbreakable bond. But when a serious incident occurs, they are forced to face tough choices that could change their lives forever.

The novel explores the blurred lines between right and wrong, highlighting the challenges teens face when caught in difficult situations. Fisher's writing brings to life the intense emotions and moral dilemmas faced by the characters, making readers question how far they would go for a friend and at what cost.

Crossing the Line is a thought-provoking read that tackles themes of trust, guilt, and the impact of our choices. It's an excellent pick for readers looking for an engaging story with relatable characters navigating the complexities of growing up.

CROSSING THE LINE

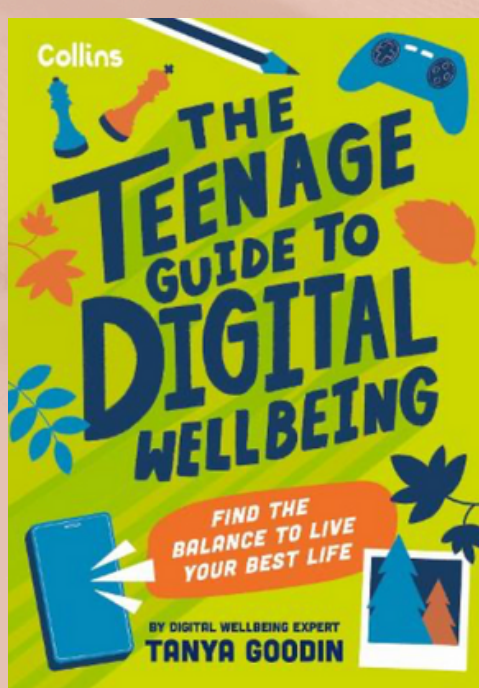
Never Let Me Go by Kazuo Ishiguro is a haunting and poignant dystopian novel that explores themes of memory, identity, and the human condition. The story is narrated by Kathy H. who reflects on her time growing up at Hailsham, a seemingly idyllic English boarding school. Along with her friends Tommy and Ruth, Kathy slowly uncovers the dark truth behind their existence.

As the characters come of age, they realize that they are not ordinary children but clones raised for a singular, heartbreaking purpose: to donate their organs until their lives are cut short. Despite this, Ishiguro masterfully focuses on the deeply human emotions of love, jealousy, and the longing for connection, making the novel both philosophical and intensely personal.

Never Let Me Go challenges readers to reflect on what it means to be human, the ethics of scientific progress, and the fragile nature of our relationships. Kazuo Ishiguro's subtle and restrained prose leaves an unforgettable emotional impact, making it a modern classic that lingers long after the last page.



STAFF PICK!



The Teenage Guide to Digital Wellbeing by Nicola Morgan is an essential, insightful guide that tackles the challenges and opportunities of growing up in the digital age. Aimed at teenagers, this book provides practical advice on navigating the online world safely while maintaining a healthy balance between real-life and digital experiences.

Nicola Morgan addresses a wide range of topics including social media pressure, cyberbullying, online privacy, and the addictive nature of smartphones and apps. She also emphasizes the importance of mental health and offers strategies for managing stress, maintaining positive relationships, and developing self-care habits in an increasingly connected world.

Morgan's down-to-earth tone and straightforward advice make this guide accessible and relatable to teens, while also being informative for parents and educators. By encouraging critical thinking about screen time, digital habits, and the impact of online interactions, *The Teenage Guide to Digital Wellbeing* equips readers with the tools they need to thrive both online and offline. It's a must-read for any young person navigating the complexities of the digital world.

THE TEENAGE GUIDE TO DIGITAL WELLBEING

Why is reading so important?

Reading is incredibly important for a variety of reasons, both for personal growth and for broader cognitive, emotional, and social development. Here are some key reasons why reading matters:

1. Expands Knowledge and Vocabulary

Reading exposes you to new information, ideas, and perspectives, expanding your understanding of the world. It introduces you to different cultures, histories, and concepts. Along the way, you also pick up new vocabulary, improving both spoken and written communication skills.

2. Improves Focus and Concentration

In a fast-paced world filled with distractions, reading requires focus and concentration. This helps develop the ability to maintain attention on tasks, improving patience and the ability to think deeply.

3. Strengthens Cognitive Skills

Reading stimulates your brain, enhancing cognitive functions such as comprehension, critical thinking, and problem-solving. It helps improve memory by requiring you to retain details, characters, and plot lines, and make connections between different pieces of information.

4. Develops Empathy

Through stories, especially fiction, you can experience life from the perspectives of different characters. This allows you to develop greater empathy, as you connect with the emotions and challenges of others, broadening your understanding of the human experience.

5. Reduces Stress and Promotes Mental Wellbeing

Reading can be a form of escapism, providing relief from daily stress. Losing yourself in a book can help you relax and unwind, making it a beneficial habit for mental health. Studies have even shown that reading can lower stress levels significantly.

6. Enhances Creativity and Imagination

When reading fiction or creative non-fiction, your mind is constantly visualizing the settings, characters, and events described. This stimulates creativity and encourages imaginative thinking, which can translate into other areas of life, including problem-solving and innovation.

7. Improves Writing Skills

Regular reading exposes you to various writing styles, structures, and storytelling techniques. This helps improve your own writing abilities, whether you're writing an essay, a story, or even professional correspondence.

8. Builds Lifelong Learning Habits

Reading encourages curiosity and a love for lifelong learning. Whether it's fiction, non-fiction, or academic material, the more you read, the more you develop the habit of seeking knowledge and understanding throughout your life.

9. Increases Social Awareness

Books often reflect social, political, and cultural issues, helping readers become more informed about the world around them. Reading about different social dynamics and global events fosters a sense of social responsibility and awareness of current events.

10. Supports Academic and Career Success

Strong reading skills are essential for success in education and most careers. The ability to comprehend complex materials, analyze information, and communicate clearly is foundational to academic achievement and professional advancement.