**Suggested Reading for Prospective A Level students – even if you are not choosing English. Dip in!**

1) William Boyd – most of his make very good use of historical events and many have a thriller element. You could start with:

*Any Human Heart*:

Every life is both ordinary and extraordinary, but Logan Mountstuart's - lived from the beginning to the end of the twentieth century - contains more than its fair share of both. As a writer who finds inspiration with Hemingway in Paris and Virginia Woolf in London, as a spy recruited by Ian Fleming and betrayed in the war and as an art-dealer in '60s New York, Logan mixes with the movers and shakers of his times. But as a son, friend, lover and husband, he makes the same mistakes we all do in our search for happiness. Here, then, is the story of a life lived to the full - and a journey deep into a *very* human heart.

2) Ann Tyler – most of her books are set in Baltimore and focus on small communities.

*Dinner at the Homesick Restaurant - e*xplores the different experiences of one household from the viewpoints of each (often quirky) member, highlighting some universal truths

*Saint Maybe -* In 1965, the happy Bedloe family is living an ideal, apple-pie existence in Baltimore.  Then, in the blink of an eye, a single tragic event occurs that will transform their lives forever--particularly that of seventeen-year-old Ian Bedloe, the youngest son, who blames himself for the sudden "accidental" death of his older brother.

3) Joanna Cannon – trained at Leicester Medical School and specialised in Psychiatry. It is no surprise that her two novels show such insight into human nature. Try:

*The Trouble with Goats and Sheep -* Part coming-of-age story, part mystery, this is a quirky and utterly charming debut about a community in need of absolution and two girls learning what it means to belong. It is England, 1976. Mrs. Creasy is missing and the Avenue is alive with whispers. The neighbours blame her sudden disappearance on the heat wave, but ten-year-olds Grace and Tilly aren’t convinced. As the summer shimmers endlessly on, the girls decide to take matters into their own hands.

4) William Golding *Lord of the Flies* and Susan Hill *I’m the King of the Castle* – both rather disturbing books about how apparently innocent boys can turn into something rather nasty!

5) Susan Hill *The Woman in Black* – for those who like gothic horror. That might lead you to explore earlier works by Daphne Du Maurier such as *Rebecca* or *Jamaica’s Inn.* Or even earlier works: Stoker’s *Dracula*, Shelley’s *Frankenstein*, Stevenson’s *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*

6) Scandinoir! Jo Nesbo has written some (sometimes quite brutal) crime thrillers focusing on his detective Harry Hole: *The Bat; Cockroaches; Nemesis* etc. Is some of the violence gratuitous? You decide! You might find those by Henning Mankell (the Wallander series) or Peter Hoeg’s *Miss Smilla’s Feeling for Snow* less brutal. How do these crime novels compare with works by Conan Doyle (Sherlock Holmes), Agatha Christie (Poirot or Miss Marple), Dorothy L Sayers, P D James ….

7) Kazua Ishiguro (a British writer whose family originated in Japan) writes very well about changes in society. Try:

*Never Let Me Go*: a dystopian science fiction novel set in the future or *Remains of the Day*: a novel about the decaying British aristocracy in the 1920s and 1930s. (The people who thought Hitler was wonderful and that the working class would not be capable of voting…)

8) Anything from the Booker or Orange Prize shortlists – look them up.

9) George Orwell *1984* or Aldous Huxley *Brave New World* or John Wyndham *The Chrysalids* – for some dystopian fiction from the earlier half of the C20th.

10) Jonathan Coe – a British satirist who exposes the faultlines in today’s society: *What a Carve Up*!;*The Rotters’ Club*; *Number 11*; *Middle England*

11) Dickens *Hard Times*; Charlotte Bronte *Jane Eyre*; Jane Austen *Pride and Prejudice*; Emily Bronte *Wuthering Heights*;

Wilkie Collins *The Woman in White* or *The Moonstone*; Jerome K Jerome *Three Men in a Boat*; Swift *Gulliver’sTravels*; James Joyce *Dubliners*

12) Helen Dunmore – *The Siege* (the siege of Leningrad); *Exposure* (Cold War Britain) – and many others