

Complex and Difficult Issues — *Note to parents/carers: books from this list are chosen because they help the reader to think, understand and empathise with some complex and difficult issues. By secondary school age, we would increasingly expect young people to be ready to engage with this but parents know their children best; if you have queries about suitability, please check online reviews or ask Mr Smith (school librarian).*



Books to help you think, understand and empathise

Amnesia/Memory/Self and Identity

The Memory Book by Lara Avery
The One Memory of Flora Banks by Emily Barr
Every Day by David Levithan
The Adoration of Jenna Fox by Mary Pearson
Slated by Teri Terry
Before I Go to Sleep by SJ Watson
Memoirs of a Teenage Amnesiac by G Zevin

Anxiety

A Quiet Kind of Thunder by Sarah Barnard
Under Rose-Tainted Skies by Louise Gornall
Worries Go Away by Kes Gray (picture book)
I Was Born For This by Alice Oseman

Body image/Anorexia/Eating Disorders

Blubber by Judy Blume
Staying Fat for Sarah Byrnes by Chris Crutcher
Wintergirls by Laurie Halse Anderson
Elena Vanishing by Elena & Clare Dunkle
Fat Boy Swim by Catherine Forde
Second Start to the Right by Deborah Hautzig
Nothing Tastes as Good by Claire Hennessey
The Art of Starving by Sam Miller
Dumplin' by Julie Murphy
Gloves Off by Louisa Reid

Bullying

Seven Days by Eve Ainsworth
Blubber by Judy Blume
Inside My Head by Jim Carrington
The Chocolate War by Robert Cormier
Kick the Moon by Muhammed Khan
Being Miss Nobody by Tamsin Winter

Captivity

Bunker Diary by Kevin Brooks

Stolen by Lucy Christopher
Guantanamo Boy by Anna Perrera
The Cellar by Natasha Preston

Coming of Age – various issues

Flying Lessons and Other Stories - various authors
Booked by Kwame Alexander
Are You There God? It's Me, Margaret - J Blume
Open: A Toolkit for How Magic and Messed Up Life Can Be by Gemma Cairney (NF help book)
Perks of Being a Wallflower by Stephen Chbosky
Kick the Moon by Muhammed Khan
Ten Things We Shouldn't Have Done - S Mlynowski
Solitaire, Radio Silence or *I Was Born for This* by Alice Oseman
What Momma Left Me by Renee Watson

Coping with family depression/mental health

Boy Underwater by Adam Baron
See You In The Cosmos by Jack Cheng
15 Days Without a Head by Dave Cousins
The Boy in the Tower by Polly Ho-Yen
Saving Francesca by M. Marchetta
Crazy by Han Nolan

Coping with family illness

A Pocketful of Stars by Aisha Bushby
Nest by Esther Ehrlich
A Monster Calls by Patrick Ness
My Sister's Keeper by Jodi Picoult

Drums, Girls and Dangerous Pie by Jordan Sonnenblick

Depression or Suicide

Thirteen Reasons Why by Jay Asher
Kite Spirit by Sita Brahmachari
We Are Young by Cat Clarke
I Was Here by Gayle Forman
Night Shift by Debi Gliori (picture book)
Reasons to Stay Alive by Matt Haig
Impulse by Ellen Hopkins
And The Stars Were Burning Brightly by Danielle Jawando
The Science of Breakable Things by Tae Keller
Darius The Great is Not Okay by Adib Khorram
Some Kind of Happiness by Claire Legrand
All the Bright Places by Jennifer Niven
All the Things We Never Said by Yasmin Rahman
When Reason Breaks by Cindy Rodriguez
The Million Pieces of Neena Gill by Emma Smith-Barton
The Red Tree by Shaun Tan (picture book)
It's Kind of a Funny Story by Ned Vizzini
My Heart and Other Black Holes by J. Warga

Disability or Difference

Out of My Mind by Sharon Draper
Check Mates by Stuart Foster
The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time by Mark Haddon
Fish in a Tree by Lynda Hunt
Whisper by Crissie Keighery
Accidents of Nature by Harriet McBryde Johnson
Red Sky in the Morning by Elizabeth Laird
A Kind of Spark by Ellen McNicholl
Rain Reign or *How to Look for a Lost Dog* by Ann Martin
A Mango-Shaped Space by Wendy Mass
Miss Spitfire by Sarah Miller
Wonder by RJ Palacio
Planet Earth is Blue by Nicole Pantelakos
House Rules by Jodi Piccolt
Ghost by Jason Reynolds
Can you See Me by L Scott & R Westcott
She Is Not Invisible by Marcus Sedgwick

Drugs and Alcohol

Go Ask Alice by Anonymous
Candy by Kevin Brooks
Junk or *The Hit* by Melvin Burgess
Clean by Juno Dawson
Other Broken Things by C Dessir
Nina is Not OK by Shappi Khorsandi
Clean by Amy Reed

Dying and Living

Love Letters to the Dead by Ava Dellaira
A Story About Cancer (With a Happy Ending) by India Desjardins
Before I Die by Jenny Downham
If I Stay and *Where I Went* by Gayle Foreman
Fault in Our Stars or *Looking for Alaska-* J Green
Hannah's Choice by Hannah and Kirsty Jones
Ways to Live Forever by Sally Nichols
Before I Fall by Lauren Olivier
Extraordinary Means by Robyn Schneider
The Great Blue Yonder by Alex Shearer
Elsewhere by Gabrielle Zevin
Falling into Place by Amy Zhang

Ethnicity and Identity

Does My Head Look Big in This? - R Abdel-Fattah
The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian by Sherman Alexie (n.b. controversial)
Starfish by Akemi Dawn Bowman
Blended by Sharon Draper
The Girl Who Fell From the Sky by Heidi Durrow
If I Ever Get Out of Here by Eric Gansworth
See No Color by Shannon Gibney
The Girl in the Broken Mirror by Savita Kalhan
Dreams From My Father by Barack Obama
Cuba 15 by Nancy Osa
Mexican Whiteboy by Matt de la Pena
Patron Saints of Nothing by Randy Ribay
Anita and Me by Myra Syal
Gabi, A Girl in Pieces by Isabel Quintero
Frankly in Love by David Yoon

Euthanasia

The Weight of a Thousand Feathers by Brian Conaghan
The Universe vs Alex Woods by Gavin Extence
Me Before You by JoJo Moyes
Mercy by Jodi Picoult

Families – complex or difficult

Running on Empty by SE Durrant
Heroic or Being Billy by Phil Earle
Scarlet Ibis by Gill Lewis
We Are All Made of Molecules, Word Nerd or My Messed-Up Life by Susin Nielsen
Chinese Cinderella by Adeline Yen Mah
Run, Rebel by Manjeet Mann
My Name is Leon by Kit de Waal
A Boy Called Hope by Lara Williamson

Fitting in – problems with

Why We Took the Car by Wolfgang Herrndorf
Rose, Interrupted by Patrice Lawrence
Holding up the Universe by Jennifer Niven
Eleanor and Park or *Fangirl* by Rainbow Rowell
Catcher in the Rye by JD Salinger
Stargirl by Jerry Spinnelli

Gang Culture/Violence/Identity

I Predict a Riot by Catherine Bruton
When I Was Joe by Keren David
The Outsiders by SE Hinton
Pigeon English by Stephen Kelman
Orangeboy by Patrice Lawrence
The Knife that Killed Me by Anthony McGowan
Long Way Down by Jason Reynolds
Little Bit or *Crongton Knights* by Alex Wheatle
Gangsta Rap by Benjamin Zephaniah

Grief

Clap When You Land by Elizabeth Acevedo
Lost by Eve Ainsworth
Rebound by Kwame Alexander
The Thing About Jellyfish by Ali Benjamin
Tiger Eyes by Judy Blume
Artichoke Hearts by Sita Brahmachari
A Pocketful of Stars by Aisha Bushby
The Elephant by Peter Carnavas

A Library of Lemons by Jo Cotterill
The Many Worlds of Albie Bright by C Edge
Mockingbird by Kathryn Erskine (+ autism)
Two Weeks With the Queen by Morris Gleitzman
Ostrich Boys by Keith Gray (+coming of age)
Wildspark by Vashti Hardy
The Heart and the Bottle by Jeffers (picture book)
The Square Root of Summer by Harriet R Hapgood
We Are Okay by Nina LaCour
The Sky is Everywhere by Jandi Nelson
Optimists Die First by Susin Nielson
My Sister Lives on the Mantelpiece or *Ketchup*
Clouds by Annabel Pitcher

HIV/Aids

We Are Lost and Found by Helene Dunbar
Full Disclosure by Camryn Garrett
Like a Love Story by Abdi Nazemian
Just Between Us by JH Trumble

Imprisonment or Death Penalty

Moonrise by Sarah Crossan
Blame by Simon Mayo
Lockdown by Walter Dean Myers
Guantanamo Boy by Anna Perara
Holes by Louis Sachar

Mental Health issues/illness

Beautiful Broken Things by Sara Barnard
Game Changer by Tim Bowler (phobias)
Am I Normal Yet? or *All We All Lemmings and Snowflakes* by Holly Bourne
The Surprising Power of a Good Dumpling by Wai Chim
Mind Your Head by Juno Dawson (NF help book)
Shock of the Fall by Nathan Filer
Truth Pixie by Matt Haig (picture book)
Don't Call Me Crazy ed by Kelly Jensen
The Mystery of the Colour Thief by Ewa Jozefkowicz
When We Collided by Emery Lord
The Boy, the Mole, the Fox and the Horse by Charlie Mackesy
Panther by David Owen
On a Scale of 1 to 10 by Ceylan Scott (BPD)

Wild Awake by Hilary Smith
Words on Bathroom Walls by Julia Walton

Misogyny

The Handmaid's Tale by Margaret Atwood
The Gender Game by Bella Forrest
A Thousand Splendid Suns by Khalid Hosseini
Only Ever Yours by Louise O'Neill
Maresi by Maria Turttschaninoff
I am Malala by Malala Yousafzai

Obsessive Compulsive Disorder

All The Things That Could Go Wrong by S. Foster
Turtles All The Way Down by John Green
OCDaniel by Wesley King
The Goldfish Boy by Lisa Thompson

Poverty and Homelessness

Lottery Boy by Michael Byrne
Toffee by Sarah Crossan
Sleeping in My Jeans by Connie K Leonard
No Fixed Address by Susin Nielson
Where I Live by Brenda Rufener
Stone Cold by Robert Swindells
Homecoming by Cynthia Voigt

Racism

The Hypnotist by Laurence Anholt
Noughts and Crosses by Malorie Blackman
Claudette Colvin: Twice Towards Justice -Hoose
To Kill a Mockingbird by Harper Lee
The Rock and the River by Kekla Magoon
Coming of Age in Mississippi by Anne Moody
The Bluest Eye or *Beloved* by Toni Morrison
Small Great Things by Jodi Picoult
All American Boys by J. Reynolds and B. Kelly
I Am Thunder by Muhammed Khan
Ghost Boys by Jewell Parker Rhodes
The Boxer by Nikesh Shukla
Maniac Magee by Jerry Spinelli
Lies We Tell Ourselves by Robin Talley
Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry by Mildred Taylor
The Hate U Give or *On the Come Up* by Angie Thomas
The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn by M Twain

Crow by Barbara Wright
Black Boy by Richard Wright
Front Desk by Kelly Yang

Redemption, Injustice or Regret

Heart-shaped Bruise by Tanya Byrne
Looking for JJ by Anne Cassidy
Whirligig by Paul Fleischman
We Were Liars by Emily Lockhart
Monster by Walter Dean Myers
The Storyteller by Jodi Picoult

Refugee experience

Give Me Shelter: An Asylum Seeker Anthology
The Unforgotten Coat by Frank Cottrell Boyce
No Ballet Shoes in Syria by Catherine Bruton
Abela: The Girl Who Saw Lions by Bernie Doherty
Don't Stop Thinking about Tomorrow - S Curham
Boy 87 by Ele Fountain
The Bone Sparrow by Zana Fraillion
In the Sea there are Crocodiles by Fabio Geda
Boy Overboard and *Girl Underground* by Morris Gleitzman
Inside Out and Back Again by Thanhha Lai
A Story Like the Wind by Gill Lewis
Shadow by Michael Morpurgo
The Other Side of Truth by Beverly Naidoo
A Long Walk to Water by Linda Sue Park
The Boy at the Back of the Class by Onjali Rauf
Salt to the Sea by Ruta Sepetys
The Arrival by Shaun Tan
The Fox Girl and the White Gazelle by Victoria Williamson
Refugee Boy by Benjamin Zephaniah

Relationships

Nick and Norah's Infinite Playlist-Cohn & Levithan
An Abundance of Katherines by John Green
To All the Boys I've Loved Before by Jenny Han
Why We Broke Up by Daniel Handler
Hold Back the Stars by Katie Khan
Across the Barricades by Joan Lingard
I'll Give You the Sun by Jandi Nelson
One Day by David Nicholls
Big Mouth and Ugly Girl by Joyce Carol Oates

Rani and Sukh by Bali Rai
How I Live Now by Meg Rosoff
Written in the Stars by Aisha Saeed
Our Chemical Hearts by Krystal Sutherland
If You Come Softly by Jacqueline Woodson
Everything, Everything or *The Sun is Also a Star* by Nicola Yoon

Self-Harming

Damage by Eve Ainsworth
Saving Daisy by Phil Earle
Girl in Pieces by Kathleen Glasgow
Red Tears by Joanna Kenrick
Scars by Cheryl Rainfield

Sexual Assault and Physical or Sexual Abuse

Purple Hibiscus by Chimamanda Adichie
Shout or *Speak* by Laurie Halse Anderson
I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings by Maya Angelou
No Shame or *No Virgin* by Anne Cassidy
Toffee by Sarah Crossan
You Against Me by Jenny Downham
Learning to Scream by Beate Teresa Hanike
The Kite Runner by Khalid Hosseini
Outside by Sarah Ann Juckes
Lucky by Alice Sebold

Slavery

Copper Sun by Sharon Draper
Elijah of Buxton by Christopher Paul Curtis
Homegoing by Yaa Gyasi
Day of Tears by Julius Lester
Sold by Patricia McCormick
Never Forgotten by Patricia McKissack
The Glory Field by Walter Dean Myers
Nightjohn by Gary Paulsen

Social Justice

Change is Gonna Come – various BAME authors
Here I Stand: Stories that Speak for Freedom
Protest: Stories of Resistance -various authors
Terror Kid by Benjamin Zephaniah

Social Media/Surveillance—hooked on/dangers

Feed by MT Anderson
Need by Joelle Charbonneau
Little Brother by Cory Doctorow
Notes on a Nervous Planet by Matt Haig
Queen of Likes by Hillary Homzie
Unfriended by Rachel Vail

Teen Pregnancy

Boys Don't Cry by Malorie Blackman
Someone Like You by Sarah Dessen
Dear Nobody by Berlie Doherty
A Pure Swift Cry by Siobhan Dowd
Megan by Mary Hooper
Trouble by Non Pratt
How to Save a Life by Sara Zarr

Transplants

Pig Heart Boy by Malorie Blackman
Eva by Peter Dickinson
Out of Heart by Irfan Master
Cold Hands, Warm Heart by Jill Wolfson

Young Carers

Tender by Eve Ainsworth
The Weight of a Thousand Feathers by Brian Conaghan
The Outsiders by SE Hinton
This Raging Light by Estelle Laure
Broken Soup by Jenny Valentine