

Pre-university wider learning recommendations

Some wider academic reading is a key step in making a successful application to universities. It can also really help shape your interests and decisions about what you want to do after leaving school. If you are genuinely interested in your A level subjects then hopefully this will be an enjoyable thing to do anyway! It is a really good idea to jot down very brief notes as you go so that you can potentially discuss the book when you write your university application or attend an interview (ie. key points, what you agreed/disagreed with, what you enjoyed most, any questions you had).

Biology

- Life Ascending - Nick Lane
- Mutants - Armand Marie Leroi
- Spillover - David Quammen
- The Selfish Gene - Richard Dawkins
- Biology articles from Scientific American/New Scientist

Chemistry

- Molecules - Atkins
- Napoleon's Buttons: How 17 Molecules Changed History - Le Couteur & Burreson:
- Periodic Tales - Aldersey-Williams
- S Kean: The Disappearing Spoon...and other true tales from the Periodic Table - Kean
- Royal Society of Chemistry <http://www.rsc.org/periodic-table>
- Chemistry articles from Scientific American/New Scientist

Physics

- *A Short History of Nearly Everything* by Bill Bryson
- *Big Bang: The Most Important Scientific Discovery of All Time and Why You Need to Know About It* by Simon Singh
- *A Brief History of Time* by Stephen Hawking
- *The Universe in a Nutshell* by Stephen Hawking
- *The Making of the Atomic Bomb* by Richard Rhodes
- *Carrying the Fire: An Astronaut's Journeys* by Michael Collins (the Apollo 11 astronaut).
- *13 Things That Don't Make Sense: The Most Intriguing Scientific Mysteries of Our Time* by Michael Brooks
- *Surely you're joking Mr Feynman* by Richard P Feynman and Ralph Leighton.
- *Six Easy Pieces: Fundamentals of Physics Explained* by Richard P Feynman (or any other book by the same author)
- *Stuff Matters* by Mark Miodownik

Medicine

- Very Short Introduction to Medical Ethics
- This is going to hurt - Adam Kay
- Being Mortal - Atul Gawande
- Anything on the Student BMJ website
- Anything from the Inside Health BBC podcast series

Economics

- Economics: The User's Guide - Ha-Joon Chang
- The Undercover Economist Strikes Back - Tim Harford
- The Almighty Dollar - Dharshini David
- Economics articles from The Economist magazine

English Literature

- A Little History of Literature - John Sutherland
- The Oxford Book of English Verse - edited by Christopher Ricks
- A good nineteenth century novel. Some suggestions include: Great Expectations - Charles Dickens, Far From the Madding Crowd - Thomas Hardy, Wuthering Heights - Emily Bronte, Pride and Prejudice - Jane Austen, Frankenstein, Mary Shelley.
- A Shakespeare play - try King Lear, The Tempest or Twelfth Night and seek out some performances you could watch online.
- A pre-1900 poet: have a look at John Donne, William Blake or John Keats.

French

- Perfume- Patrick Süskind
- Metroland- Julian Barnes
- Le Petit Prince- Antoine de Saint-Exupéry
- No et moi- Delphine de Vigan

German

- Perfume- Patrick Süskind
- Learn German with stories- Andre Klein
- Die Schachnovelle- Stefan Zweig
- Die Verwandlung- Franz Kafka

Spanish - choose two or three that appeal

Non-fiction in English

- A Land of Bull by Tim Parfitt
- Homage to Catalonia by George Orwell
- As I walked out one Midsummer Morning by Laurie Lee
- The Companion to Hispanic Studies

Fiction in English

- One Hundred Years of Solitude by Gabriel García Márquez

Fiction in Spanish

- El mal de Gutenberg by Jesús Carazo
- Yerma by Federico García Lorca
- Penguin Parallel Text - Spanish Short stories
- Ardiente Paciencia by Antonio Skármeta

In addition, Films

- La Lengua de las Mariposas
- Volver
- Todo Sobre mi Madre
- Diarios de Motocicleta

Maths

- Things to make and do in the Fourth dimension - Matt Parker
- Alex's adventures in Numberland - Alex Bellos
- The Number Mysteries - Marcus du Sautoy
- Humble Pi A comedy of Maths Errors - Matt Parker
- 1089 and All That - David Acheson
- The Calculus Story - David Acheson
- Lewis Carroll in Numberland - Robin Wilson
- Euler's Pioneering Equation - Robin Wilson
- How not to be wrong The hidden Maths of everyday life - Jordan Ellenberg

History

Complete one or two of the following suggestions, not all (!):

- Read *Why History Matters*, by John Tosh
- Read *The Silk Roads: A New History Of The World*, by Peter Frankopan
- Read *Sapiens*, by Yoav Noah Harari. This is a great book - *A Brief History of Humankind*
- Read *Guns, Germs and Steel*, by Jared Diamon. Like Sapiens, this is part anthropology, part history. It gives a great overview of the drivers of change across thousands of years.
- Read *Wealth and Power*, Orville Schell and John Delury (if you are interested in Chinese history)
- Read *Revolutionary Russia 1891-1991* by Orlando Figes if you are interested in Russian history
- Read *My Soul is Rested* by Howell Raines. A collection of interviews from the civil rights era, dip into them and read a few if not all!
- Listen to some of the Reith Lectures (the last two years' lectures have been given by Margaret Macmillan and Hilary Mantel, and are a really interesting discussion of big ideas around history: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b00729d9>)
- Visit - <http://www.historyandpolicy.org/> - read a policy paper and an opinion article and reflect on what you have read. Are there any potential current issues where you think that it would be worth thinking about how precedents and the past could shape the future?
- Read chapter 1 & 3 of Allan Megill's, *Historical Knowledge, Historical Error*

- Visit the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford: <https://www.ashmolean.org/>; check the permanent collection and also see what exhibitions are upcoming! Good stuff on China and Da Vinci.
- Visit the Bodleian Library Weston Library museum on Broad Street, Oxford. Check out the exhibitions: <https://www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/whatson/whats-on/current-exhibitions>
- Go to any of London's superb museums: British Museum, Museum of London Docklands, Wellcome Trust Euston, The British Library always has great exhibitions, The Churchill War Rooms, HMS Belfast, The Tower of London, The Old Operating Theatre, The Foundling Museum
- Go big: visit Stonehenge, Warwick Castle, Dover Castle, Hadrian's Wall!

Classics (Ancient History, Latin and Greek):

- Reading in translation Vergil's Aeneid, Homer's Odyssey and Iliad, and any Greek tragedies by Aeschylus, Sophocles or Euripides would be good.
- Read any past issues of *Omnibus*, the Classical Association magazine - available from CB, or online - but without pictures - at: <https://archive.org/details/omnibusmagazine>
- Any of the books below are also great, available from the library or CB or from a good bookshop:
- *The Classical world: an epic history of Greece and Rome*, Robin Lane Fox
- *Early Greece*, Oswyn Murray
- *SPQR. A History of Ancient Rome*, Mary Beard
- *Power of Images in Age of Augustus*, Paul Zanker
- *Pompeii*, Mary Beard
- *Homer on Life and Death*, Jasper Griffin (after you have read the Iliad)
- *Further Voices in Vergil's Aeneid*, Oliver Lyne (after you have read the Aeneid)
- *Literacy and orality in ancient Greece*, Rosalind Thomas
- *Inventing the Barbarian*, Edith Hall
- *The Lagoon. How Aristotle Invented Science*, Armand Marie Leroi

Philosophy

- *A history of Western Philosophy*, Bertrand Russell
- *Meditation on first philosophy*, Rene Descartes
- *Philosophy, the basics*, Warburton
- *Five Dialogues*, Plato
- *Epistemology*, a contemporary introduction, Audi
- *At the existentialists cafe*, Sarah Bakewell
- *Sophie's World*, Jostein Gaardner
- *The 'short introduction' series*
- *An essay concerning Human Understanding*, John Locke
- *Think*, Simon Blackburn
- *What does it all mean?*, Thomas Nagel

Online references:

- Blackburn, S. *The Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy*, OUP 1996
- *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*: an excellent and constantly growing resource, highly detailed

Online journals:

- *Think* (www.royalinstitutephilosophy.org/think/index.php)
- *The Philosopher's Magazine* (www.philosophersnet.com)
- *Philosophy Now* (www.philosophynow.org)

Religious Studies

Philosophy:

- *An introduction to the Philosophy of Religion*, Brian Davies
- *The puzzle of God*, Peter Vardy
- *Reason and Religious Belief*, Michael Peterson, William Hasker
- *Philosophy of Religion a very short introduction*, Tim Bayne

Ethics:

- *Ethics, a beginners guide*, Peter Cave
- *The quest for a moral compass, a global history of ethics*, Kenan Malik
- *Christian Ethics*, Neil Messer
- *Principia Ethica*, Moore
- *Situation Ethics*, Fletcher
- *Rethinking life and death*, Peter Singer

Religious Thought:

- *Letters and papers from Prison*, Dietrich Bonhoeffer
- Theology the basics*, Alistair Mcgrath
- *Feminist Thought*, Rosemary Tong

Psychology

- *Opening Skinner's Box*, Lauren Slater
- *The Psychopath Whisperer*, Kent Kiehl
- *Inventing Ourselves-the secret life of the teenage brain*, Sarah Blakemore

Videos

- *The Real Rain Man*
- *The Stanford Prison Experiment*
- *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*
- *Forensics - The Real CSI*

MOOCs

- *Forensic Psychology* <https://www.open.edu/openlearn/health-sports-psychology/forensic-psychology/content-section-overview?active-tab=description-tab>
- *Understanding Depression and Anxiety* <https://www.open.edu/openlearn/health-sports-psychology/health/understanding-depression-and-anxiety/content-section-0?active-tab=description-tab>
- *Exploring sport coaching and psychology* <https://www.open.edu/openlearn/health-sports-psychology/exploring-sport-coaching-and-psychology/content-section-overview?active-tab=description-tab>

Geography

Here you will find a physical and human geography reading list from the GA:

- https://www.geography.org.uk/write/MediaUploads/Get%20involved/Reading_List_1_Human_Geography.pdf

- https://www.geography.org.uk/write/MediaUploads/Get%20involved/Reading_List_2_Physical_Geography,_Climate_Change_and_Maps.pdf

Books about how to be an effective A level student

Learning how to better learn!

Learning How to Learn: How to Succeed in School Without Spending All Your Time Studying by Barbara Oakley with Terrence Sejnowski

If you read only one book on 'how to become a better learner' before you get to Sixth Form, make it this one. Don't be put off by a) the fact that it's been written for teenagers in the United States (they have the same brains and face very similar challenges in school to you) or, b) some of the more gushing and cringeworthy language. This is one of the few 'learning how to learn' books which is fun to read, based in sound science, and offers good practical suggestions.

Deep work: rules for success in a distracted world by Cal Newport

If you read only two books on 'how to become a better learner', make this the second one. Cal Newport, author of the enormously influential 'stuck hacks' blog for 16 years+ students, discusses how to develop and maintain the sharp focus necessary to focus on difficult tasks that require you to really think.

The Intelligence Trap: Revolutionise your Thinking and Make Wiser Decisions by David Robson

If you're interested in how to develop your intelligence beyond the classroom, this book is a great starting point. David Robson how "greater education and expertise can often amplify our mistakes while rendering us blind to our biases," and shows us how to use our intelligence more wisely.