



MERCHANT TAYLORS'

School

Dear Parents,

Summer Reading Challenge 2026

The Merchant Taylors' English Department is delighted to announce the launch of this year's Summer Reading Challenge. The purpose of the challenge is to encourage our pupils to develop and maintain a love of reading over the summer holiday. What better companion by the pool than a book in the hand? What better way to develop the mind and those qualities associated with the heart?

The challenge is open to pupils currently in the Lower School and to those joining us in September. Each year group has been given a slightly different challenge, which range from creative projects inspired by reading, to class presentations and public readings, to creating Booktok videos and becoming a reading celebrity among the MTS community.

Boys in the Fourth Form are particularly encouraged to explore different types of reading material in preparation for starting their GCSEs. They should make good use of the excellent Middle School Reading List available to them, on Accessit.

Every pupil is expected to participate in this challenge, which includes reading a minimum of three books, either of different authors or genres. With nine weeks of holiday, however, we would expect pupils to read significantly more and really set out to impress their new teacher in September. The deadline for the completion of the challenge will be Monday 14th September 2024. The Summer Reading Challenge will form the first piece of assessment in English, your son receiving a level which will contribute towards the first formal grading session of the new academic year.

There is an additional **optional** competition "Inspired by Books" for those pupils who feel moved to produce something creative related to what they have read, such as artwork, animation or musical composition. This will be judged separately by the Library and is not part of the compulsory challenge.

The correlation between pupils who are active readers and those who achieve highly in English at all levels, including public examination, is well known. Our greatest wish, however, is that every pupil at Merchant Taylors' School discovers and nurtures a love of reading, in whatever form that may take; for it is a lifelong joy.

Yours,

Matthew Hilton-Dennis, Head of English

Amanda South, Senior Librarian



SUMMER READING CHALLENGE 2026

English Department

To start Year 7...

Creative Bingo Board



To start Year 7...



Based on the books you read over summer, complete a line of three tasks horizontally, vertically or diagonally.

Bring them into school at the start of term.

Your English teacher will choose a class winner and award gold notes to the best entries.

Design a book cover for one of the books you read this summer.	Create a model of a place described in one of the books you read over summer.	Write a plan for what might happen in a sequel to one of the books you read this summer.
Write the final thoughts of one of the characters in a book you read this summer.	Write a poem inspired by one of the books you read this summer	Draw your favourite character from one of the books you read this summer.
Draw a map to show where the action of one of your books takes place.	Draw a poster advertising one of the books you read this summer.	Write a letter to the writer of one of your books explaining what you thought of it.

To start Year 7...

Creative Bingo Board

One of your tasks could also form the basis of an entry into the library's voluntary Inspiration Challenge:



INSPIRED BY BOOKS

MTS LIBRARY

Let your summer reading inspire you.

Open to all year groups.



Prizes available!

WHAT?

Get creative: you can draw, animate, compose, sculpt, design...
The possibilities are endless.

WHEN?

Start reading now! Then as you get inspired you can get creative.

Hand in by **Monday 15th September.**

Email a link to **library@mtsn.org.uk**
Or hand in to the library desk.



TO START YEAR 9...

Give a speech
pitching your
book



To start Year 9...

Give a speech pitching your book

STEP 1:

Choose books you would like to try over summer - the library's brilliant recommended reading lists can be a useful guide.

Find lots under **Quick Lists on AccessIt:**

<https://uk.accessit.online/mrc04/#!resources/searchresult>



To start Year 9...

Give a speech pitching your book

STEP 2:

Read, read, read and enjoy! Summer, with the long lazy days, perhaps with a summer holidays or long journeys, is the perfect time to get lost in a book.



To start Year 9...

Give a speech pitching your book



STEP 3

Choose which book you read over the summer was **your favourite.**

To start Year 9...

Give a speech pitching your book



STEP 4

Plan a speech of at least two minutes without any notes, and tell us: what you liked about it, why we should read it, what else is it like, why would it be a good book to promote to next year's 4ths?

Bring the book into school – show it to us – you could even read a short section. **No spoilers, though!**

You are pitching your book for a new reading list. After we've heard them all, we'll **vote for which book appeals the most** and it will form part of a 'Summer Reading Challenge Recommendations List' for the library.

To start Year 9...

FAQs...

- Can it be any book?

Mostly yes – make sure it's something you want to read but also a little outside your comfort zone (maybe a new genre?). This is a chance to make a good impression with your new English teacher and challenge yourself. (not a graphic novel – they have their place but not here!)

- How many books do you have to read?

You only have to present on one, but **can mention the others** when you explain the book you chose. How many can you read in 8 weeks with no school? Set yourself a challenge!

- Please can I have notes?

I'm afraid not – the point isn't to prepare a polished speech or read out an essay, it's to talk engagingly and spontaneously about your reading. Think of it as a chat with a friend where you persuade your friend to give your book a go. Think of your audience...this is a great way to start practicing for the Public Speaking Competition held in January.

Prizes will be awarded to the best in the year!

