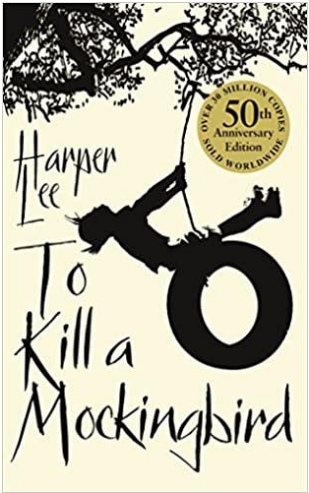
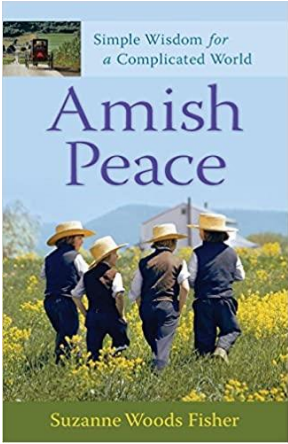
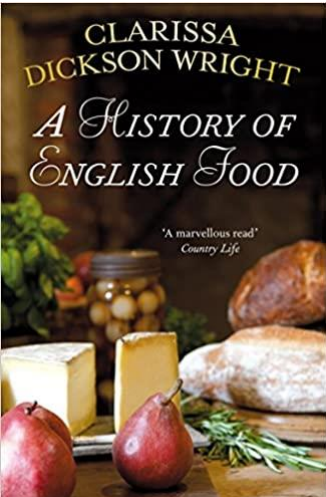
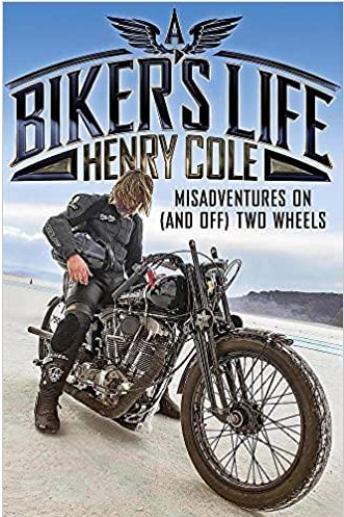
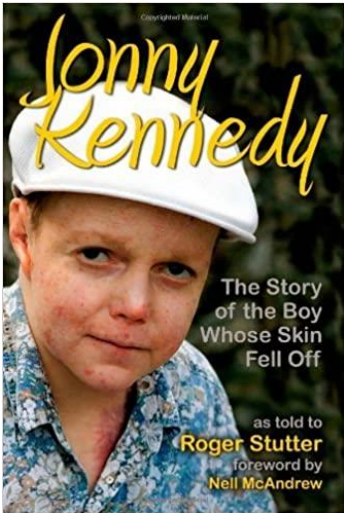
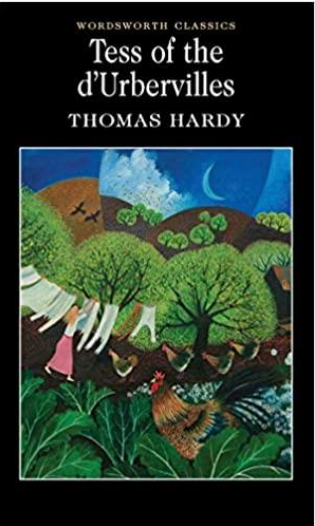
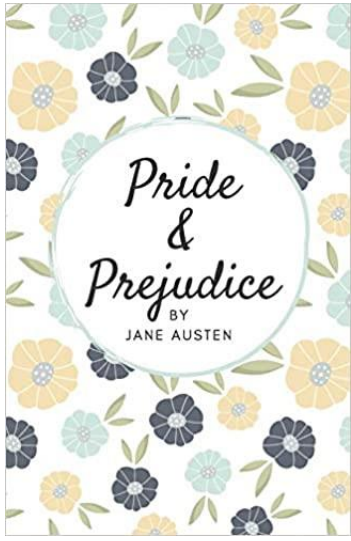
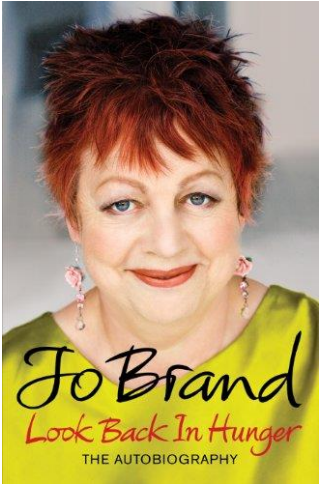
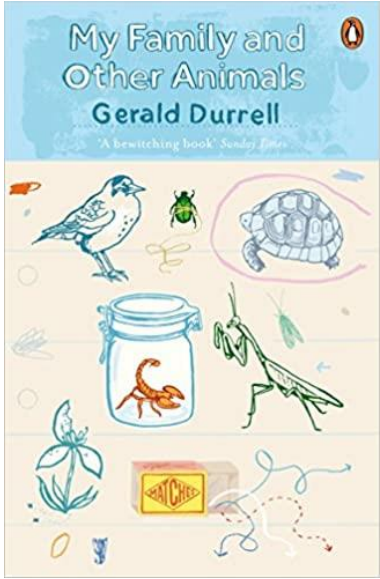


Book cover	Book Title and Author	Blurb	Reason for choice
	<p>'To Kill a Mockingbird' by Harper Lee</p>	<p>A heartbreaking and heartwarming story of a young girl's struggle to understand the deeply divided world of the USA in the 1930s, and the tragic demise of a young man whose only crimes are his compassion and colour.</p>	<p>My absolute all time favourite book and I have read it more times than I can count; I even have a 1st edition copy! I love the humour, the narrative voice, the 'lessening' innocence of the main character and how it is so cleverly intertwined with the real-life tragedy.</p>
	<p>'Amish Peace: Simple Wisdom for a Complicated World' by Suzanne Woods Fisher</p>	<p>An incredible insight into the lives and values of Amish people, and how they foster peace in their existence and communities. It's not just recount, it includes questions for reflection and direct tips to consider including in your own daily routine.</p>	<p>I studied Amish history as part of a university module and still find it completely fascinating. This is an absolutely beautiful book that just seems to ooze peace and serenity. It's a truly uplifting read.</p>
	<p>'A History of English Food' by Clarissa Dickson-Wright</p>	<p>This is nearly 500 pages of a celebration of food in England through history. Amazing inclusion of real recipes and manners/conventions, including context elements like what constituted plates, knives and forks!</p>	<p>Yum – I love food! I loved the author when she appeared on the TV 'Two Fat Ladies' series and her dry humour trickles beautifully through this too. It's absolutely packed with factual</p>

			<p>information and trivial details that are truly entertaining and intriguing.</p>
	<p>'A Biker's Life – Misadventures On (and Off) Two Wheels' by Henry Cole</p>	<p>A highly autobiographical account of his passion for life and motorbikes, this explores very unexpected aspects of Henry Cole's very privileged origins and a very different side to the persona we see on television screens. It details quite a lot of life-history that we are really not aware of as we see him on television; a multi-faceted man.</p>	<p>Hmm, I find him very entertaining, but this is an interesting read as much for the fact it also possibly presents him as quite a spoilt man too? Intriguing to see the very different sides of his character, you are never quite sure who 'Henry Cole' is? Like him or not? Definitely a read to make you contemplate and think.</p>
	<p>'Jonny Kennedy – The Story of the Boy Whose Skin Fell Off' by Roger Stutter</p>	<p>Born with Dystrophis Epidermolysis Bullosa (EB) Jonny Kennedy died at the age of 36, and this follows his lifetime struggle with an overwhelming condition that meant his skin was irreversibly damaged by even the slightest touch. The tragedy of the memoirs is completely enveloped by Jonny's willpower, courage and determination to live his life to the full.</p>	<p>I came across this first as the Emmy-award winning documentary, which was forthright, heartbreaking and inspiring. Parts are painful to read but you never lose sight of the witty, intelligent, brave and direct young man behind the writing and it</p>

			puts your own life and troubles well and truly into perspective. Yes, it is a tear-jerking read, but incredibly inspirational.
	'The Scarlet Letter' by Nathaniel Hawthorne	Although a very modern theme of a woman (Hester Prynne), her lover and their love-child, the context of a Calvinist-Puritan society (set in the Boston USA 1600s) demonstrates how she was branded and persecuted as a 'fallen woman' but remains the heroine of the story. Written in 1850, it's intriguing Hawthorne described the story as a 'romance' and as a 'tale of human frailty and sorrow'. It is definitely both.	I first read this as part of my university studies and just felt completely absorbed by this woman's context, life, let-downs, struggles and strength, even though it is a world so far removed from our own. So many of its themes and implied judgements transfer to our modern lives; it's a text you can read on so many different levels.
	'Tess of the d'Urbervilles' by Thomas Hardy	Tess's father believes he has noble connections/family/relations and sends his beautiful daughter to visit them. She is cruelly seduced and abandoned by Alec D'Urberville. Her future is haunted by guilt/shame/thwarted love/ the loss of a baby, in a tragic sequence of that leads to Alec's and Tess's deaths.	I studied this at 'A Level' and was totally overpowered by the circumstances that conspire to make Tess the profound and tragic figure she becomes. I remember being utterly infuriated by her father! It's a text that so

			<p>engages so many human emotions – love, hate, naivety, selfishness, ignorance - an incredible journey of a read.</p>
	<p>'Pride and Prejudice' by Jane Austen</p>	<p>He's handsome and rich, she's beautiful and poor-ish. He's arrogant and proud, she's stubborn and takes a massive dislike to him...eventual love story to follow obviously! Set in the late 1700s/early 1800s it's a brilliant exploration of money, manners, class and marriage at the time. Film versions have sold its virtues to thousands!</p>	<p>I first read this as a school text. The steady, slow-paced and understated simmering of the connection between Elizabeth and Mr Darcy is timeless and crosses all class boundaries! The fantastic characterisation of Elizabeth's excruciating mother and some of her unrestrained sisters is a delight to follow! And I love the 'happy ever after' too.</p>
	<p>'Look Back in Hunger' by Jo Brand</p>	<p>Highly autobiographical, this details how Jo Brand grew up in a comfortable middle-class home but rebelled as a teen and later spent ten years working as a psychiatric nurse. She abandoned this career and became a comedienne/presenter.</p>	<p>This is a truly bittersweet read. Parts absolutely echo Jo Brand's witty and sarcastic humour, yet sections of it deliver powerful social comments about the issues that confronted and concerned her during her</p>

			<p>nursing years. It's a very easy and entertaining read but cleverly conveys quite poignant observations about health and social care.</p>
	<p>'My family and Other Animals' by Gerald Durrell</p>	<p>The first in a trilogy, this hilarious tale introduces the unconventional Durrell family. Circumstances change for them, so they take the extraordinary decision to sell their house and relocate to the sunny Greek isle of Corfu. The book was originally intended to explore the natural history of the island but ended up as a charming account of Durrell's family's experiences, from the many eccentric visitors to the ceaseless parade of puppies, toads, scorpions, geckoes, ladybugs, glow-worms, octopuses, bats, and butterflies Gerald invites into their home</p>	<p>I first read this as a young teenager and found it truly hilarious. The characterisation of each family member and their visitors is portrait sharp and the unfolding family saga is completely immersive – you could be in the room with them. It has a nostalgic innocence that is truly unique.</p>