



# IAN RAMSEY CE ACADEMY

Together to learn, to grow, to serve

# Reading Newsletter



# this MONTH in history

# AUGUST

1	1819 Herman Melville is born.	2	1924 James Baldwin is born.	3	1887 Rupert Brooke is born.	4	1875 Hans Christian Andersen dies.	5	1850 Guy de Maupassant is born.	6	1809 Alfred, Lord Tennyson is born.	7	1941 Sir Rabindranath Tagore dies.
8	1925 Brian Aldiss is born.	9	1927 Daniel Keyes is born.	10	1912 Jorge Amado is born.	11	1922 Mavis Gallant is born.	12	1964 Ian Fleming dies.	13	1946 H. G. Wells dies.	14	1926 Alice (Boyd) Adams is born.
15	1771 Walter Scott is born.	16	1949 Margaret Mitchell dies.	17	1930 Ted Hughes is born.	18	1990 B. F. Skinner dies.	19	1903 James Gould Cozzens is born.	20	1890 H. P. Lovecraft is born.	21	1649 Richard Crashaw dies.
22	1920 Ray Bradbury is born.	23	1868 Edgar Lee Masters is born.	24	1977 John Green is born.	25	1776 David Hume dies.	26	1904 Christopher Isherwood is born.	27	1871 Theodore Dreiser is born.	28	1906 John Betjeman is born.
29	1862 Maurice Maeterlinck is born.	30	1797 Mary Wollstonecraft (later Mary Shelley) is born.	31	1908 William Saroyan is born.								

# Welcome

Welcome to our August edition of the Reading Newsletter! I hope you enjoyed our last edition. This month's is packed with even more reading-related information. I hope you enjoy what is included, but if there is anything you want to see that isn't here yet, why not drop the Academy and email and let me know what you would like to be included?

This newsletter is a chance to find out about:

- fiction
- non-fiction
- poetry
- authors and their work
- Vocabulary
- how to help your child with their reading journey
- what's new in reading
- local libraries
- and much more...

So, sit back, grab a cuppa and enjoy our Reading Newsletter.

As always, your support is hugely appreciated,

Mrs Chapman-Jones



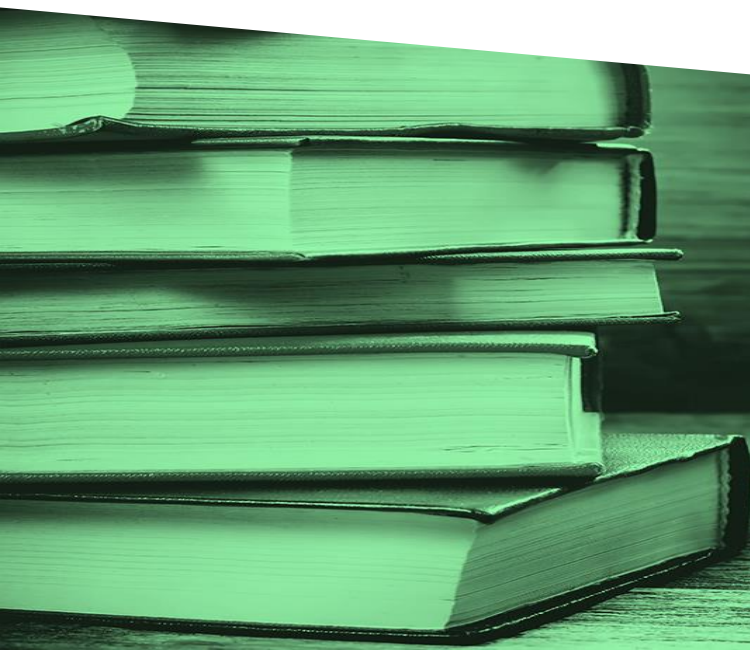
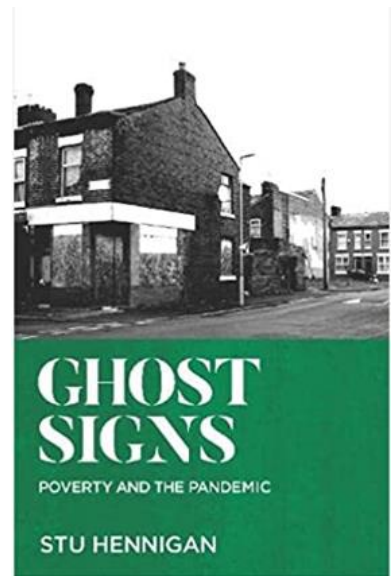
# Author spotlight

## This month's author: Stu Hennigan

Stu Hennigan is a writer, poet and musician from the north of England, currently based in Leeds. His short fiction has appeared in *Lune Journal* and the anthology *The Middle Of A Sentence*. His poetry has been published in multiple places online, including at *Visual Verse*.

He is currently working on a new novel as well as several other shorter creative projects. *Ghost Signs*, a non-fiction book based on his experiences delivering food parcels in Leeds during lockdown in 2020, is his first full-length published work.

He also works as the Senior Librarian for Stock and Reader Development at Leeds Libraries.



# Author to academy



Dear pupils of Ian Ramsey CE Academy,

As someone with a lifelong love of books, reading and writing, I'm in a very fortunate position in that I have been able to find a job which allows me to indulge in this passion and share it with others too. As Senior Librarian for Stock and Reader Development at Leeds Libraries, I am in charge of buying books for 34 libraries across the city and I do a lot of work with writers and publishers too, running events, writing/poetry workshops, and evenings where writers and publishers talk about their books. I'm now also a published writer after many years of trying; I'd had a few short pieces published before, but the day my book came out was the realisation of one of my main ambitions in life.

Learning to read is one of the most important things you can do. I taught myself to read before I went to school, using my dad's newspaper, my older sisters school books, and anything else with letters on it I could find – sauce bottles, cereal packets, the labels on bags of sweets, whatever. As soon as I went to school I was able to read books and fell in love with the act of reading immediately. 37 years later, the love affair is still burning strong. Reading is good for us for many reasons – reading non-fiction is a source of knowledge and information; it allows us to learn more about the world around us, and read about things we have never experienced ourselves. What's not often noted is how useful reading fiction can be; stories allow us to step outside of ourselves, to visit places we've never been, to experience life from the point of view of different genders, cultures, and backgrounds; it develops critical thinking skills, teaches us new words, broadens our vocabularies at the same time as it broadens our horizons.



# Author to academy



There are many ways to read. You can read a physical book, or an e-book on a tablet, computer or other device; some people prefer fiction, some non-fiction; some people like comic books, or graphic novels, or Manga; some people like to listen to books on CD, or in e-audio format; some people like fantasy stories, while others are fans of romance, or adventure, or stories about vampires, fairies, spies. I'm here to tell you that **all** reading is good reading, and **all** reading is good for you. The experience of someone who reads comic books, or listens to audio books is every bit as valid as that of someone who reads nothing but serious books in physical format, and don't let anyone try to tell you otherwise. Whatever you're reading, and however you're reading/accessing it, the only thing that matters is that you enjoy the experience. That's not to say you should like every book you read – far from it, but reading books we don't like can be as important as reading ones we do, because it teaches us to talk about *why* we don't like them, and that in turn allows us to know more about why we like the things that we do. Libraries are super-useful with this in mind. They're free to join, and books cost nothing to borrow. In my service, you can borrow twenty books at a time; if you don't like any of them? Take them back and get something else. It's free, so there's no reason not to...



# Author to academy



I've worked a lot with schools over the years and have run many creative writing competitions. In my experience, the children who wrote the best stories were always the children who liked to read the most. It's not to say that everyone who is a good reader can write, but it *is* possible to say that all good writers are good readers – they *have* to be. By reading as much – and as widely – as possible, you can learn new techniques, new ways to tell stories, new words with which to improve your own work. When I was eleven I tried to read some books by a writer called Isaac Asimov; they were very complex science fiction books, written for adults, and I didn't get very far, but in one sentence he described the “phosphorescent scintillations” of the stars. I'd never heard either of those words before and I had to look them up in a dictionary, but once I knew what they meant, I never forgot them, which is why I'm able to write about them as an example here.

Ever since I learned to read, I've loved to write and have always done it – stories, poems, articles, whatever. I love the thrill of arranging the words on the page one after the other, the act of creating something from nothing using only twenty-six letters and some punctuation marks. Have you ever sat and thought, wouldn't it be brilliant if someone wrote a story about *this*? If no one's ever done it, write it yourself!



# Author to academy



If someone *has* done it, write it yourself anyway and see what you'd do differently, and why. You may sometimes hear people talk about “rules” for writing, and see lists of things that “all great writers must do”; these kinds of lists are not to be trusted. Writing is a creative act, and creativity shouldn't be limited or constrained by rules and regulations – the act of writing is the act of realising your own creative vision, and no one should be allowed to interfere with that. You don't even need to worry about what other people think - so what if someone thinks your story is too silly, or too serious? The main thing is that you like it. You should be your own audience first, and everything else will follow.

For anyone wanting to get into writing professionally, bear this in mind; it is a *tough* business which requires a huge amount of hard work and persistence and – unless you're one of a very select few unbelievable lucky people – there will be many disappointments on the way, but if you love writing you need to keep doing it, and if you do this, one day it will find the audience it deserves. I've been writing my whole life, and my first book didn't come out until I was 41, despite many years of trying.





# Author to academy



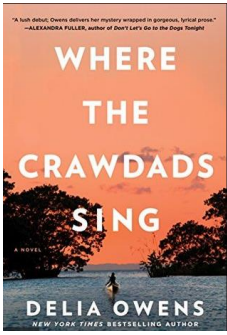
It would have been easy to give up, and there have been times where I've wanted to, but I've stuck with it and now I'm finally reaping the rewards; seeing my book in bookshops and in libraries is one of the biggest thrills I've ever experienced. All those great writers whose books I've loved to read, and now there's one with my name on sitting there next to them – wow! So keep reading, keep writing, keep talking about books, make them a big part of your life, and if you haven't done so already, join your local library! You can find whole worlds to explore on the bookshelves in there, whatever you like to read and however you like to read it, and it won't cost you or your family a penny!

Good luck to you all with everything you do in the future.

Best wishes,  
Stu Hennigan



# From page to screen



This month's From Page to Screen is Edith Delia Owens' *Where the Crawdads Sing*.

Abandoned as a girl, Kya raised herself in the dangerous marshlands of North Carolina. For years, rumours of the 'marsh girl' haunted Barkley Cove, isolating the sharp and resilient Kya from her community.



After befriending two young men in the town, Kya begins to learn more about the startling and dark world around her.





The longest word consists of 189,819 letters! That's how many letters there are in the full name of titin — a giant protein. The word is considered to be the longest in any language of the world.

The longest sentence ever printed consists of 832 words! You may find it in Victor Hugo's "Miserables". By the way, the novel was translated into 60 languages and adapted to screen countless times. It's loved by millions of fans all over the world and is a highly recommended read.

In the past, the value of the books was so high, that people had to chain books to the shelves. It was a highly effective theft prevention method and was widely practiced in the Middle Ages.

The world's tallest book, "Collection of Maritime Rules", is stored in the Amsterdam Museum. Its height is about 6.4 feet, and it's over 3 feet wide!



# 2022 Reading Challenge

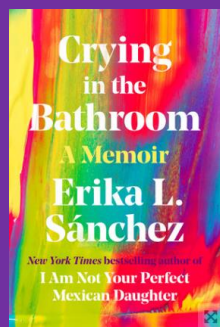
- A book with more than 500 pages
- A classic romance
- A book that became a movie
- A book published this year
- A book with a number in the title
- A book written by someone under 30
- A book with nonhuman characters
- A funny book
- A book by a female author
- A mystery or thriller
- A book with a one-word title
- A book of short stories
- A book set in a different country
- A nonfiction book
- A popular author's first book
- A book from an author you love that you haven't read yet
- A book a friend recommended
- A Pulitzer Prize-winning book
- A book based on a true story
- A book at the bottom of your to-read list
- A book your mom loves
- A book that scares you
- A book more than 100 years old
- A book based entirely on its cover
- A book you were supposed to read in school but didn't
- A memoir
- A book you can finish in a day
- A book with antonyms in the title
- A book set somewhere you've always wanted to visit
- A book that came out the year you were born
- A book with bad reviews
- A trilogy
- A book from your childhood
- A book with a love triangle
- A book set in the future
- A book set in high school
- A book with a color in the title
- A book that made you cry
- A book with magic
- A graphic novel
- A book by an author you've never read before
- A book you own but have never read
- A book that takes place in your hometown
- A book that was originally written in a different language
- A book set during Christmas
- A book written by an author with your same initials
- A play
- A banned book
- A book based on or turned into a TV show
- A book you started but never finished

# What's new?

## Non-fiction

### *Crying in the Bathroom: A Memoir* by Erika Sánchez

Growing up as the daughter of Mexican immigrants in Chicago in the nineties, Erika Sánchez was a self-described misfit ,and foul- mouthed rabble rouser who painted her nails black but also loved comedy, often laughing so hard with her friends that she had to leave her school classroom. Twenty-five years later, she's now an award-winning novelist, poet, and essayist

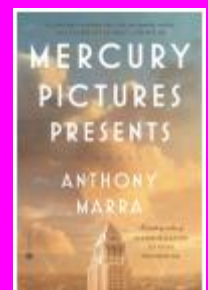


## Fiction

### *Mercury Pictures Presents: A Novel* by Anthony Marra

Like many before her, Maria Lagana has come to Hollywood to outrun her past. Born in Rome, where every Sunday her father took her to the cinema instead of church, Maria emigrates with her mother to Los Angeles after a childhood transgression leads to her father's arrest.

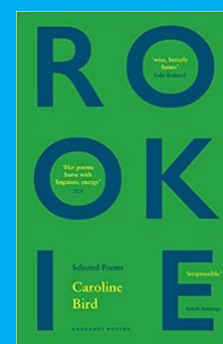
Fifteen years later, on the eve of America's entry into World War II, Maria is an associate producer at Mercury Pictures, trying to keep her personal and professional lives from falling apart.



## Poetry

### *Rookie: Selected Poems* by Caroline Bird

Caroline Bird is one of Carcanet's most popular poets. Her startling instinct for metaphor, the courage of her choice of subjects, and the integrity of her witness, set her apart: a poem is a risk, and it has to be a risk worth taking for the poet and for the reader.

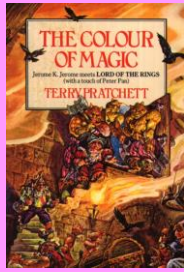


# Pupil Recommendations: Y8



## *The Colour of Magic* by Terry Pratchett

The Colour of Magic is a collection of four stories set on Discworld, a flat planet that is carried by four huge elephants that stand on the back of the giant turtle Great A'Tuin. The stories pivot on the hapless failed wizard Rincewind.



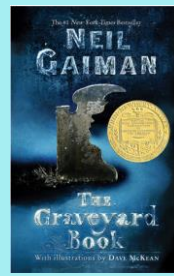
## *Dune* by Frank Herbert

Set on the desert planet Arrakis, Dune is the story of the boy Paul Atrides, heir to a noble family tasked with ruling an inhospitable world where the only thing of value is the "spice" melange, a drug capable of extending life and enhancing consciousness.



## *The Graveyard Book* by Neil Gaiman

Nobody Owens, known to his friends as Bod, is a perfectly normal boy. Well, he would be perfectly normal if he didn't live in a graveyard, being raised and educated by ghosts.



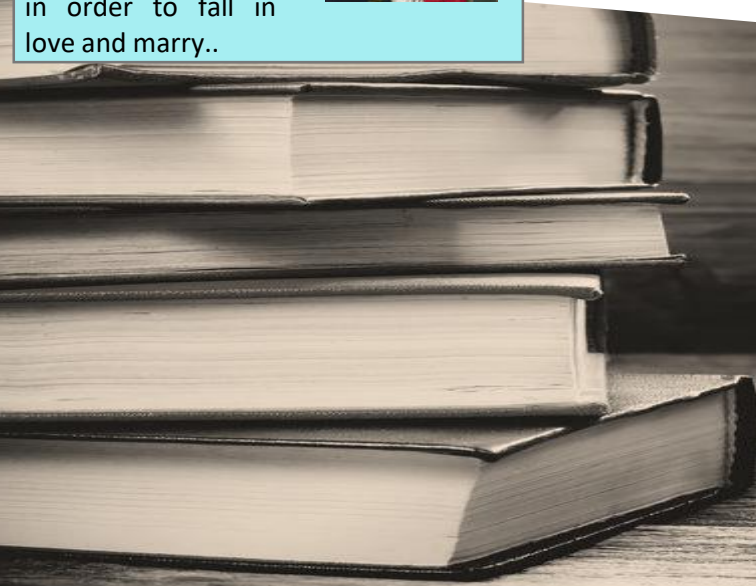
## *Pride and Prejudice* by Jane Austen

Follow the turbulent relationship between Elizabeth Bennet, and Fitzwilliam Darcy. They must overcome the titular sins of pride and prejudice in order to fall in love and marry..



## *Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Bronte

The novel follows the story of Jane, a seemingly plain and simple girl as she battles through life's struggles. Jane has many obstacles in her life - her cruel and abusive Aunt Reed, Lowood school, and her love for Rochester.

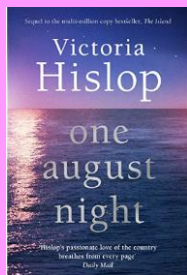


# Staff Recommendations



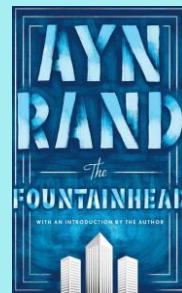
Mrs. Chapman- Jones recommends: *One August Night* by Victoria Hislop

The long awaited sequel to the superb 'he Island'. This book follows the characters from 'The Island' in the aftermath of the closure of the leper colony 'Spinalonga'.



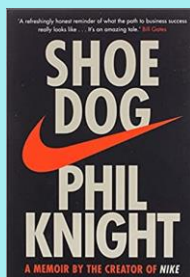
Mr. Nicholson recommends: *The Fountainhead* by Ayn Rand

A really interesting book, which looks at an individual's right to self-expression and self-determinism. It follows the career of Howard Roark, an innovative and intransigent young architect.



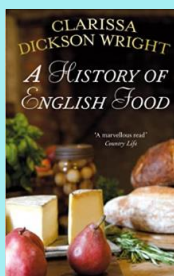
Mr. Hooker recommends: *Shoe Dog* by Phil Knight

For anyone who likes sneakers, this is a must read. From the creation of Nike to conflict along the way, if you're a true Nike advocate, then this is the book for you.



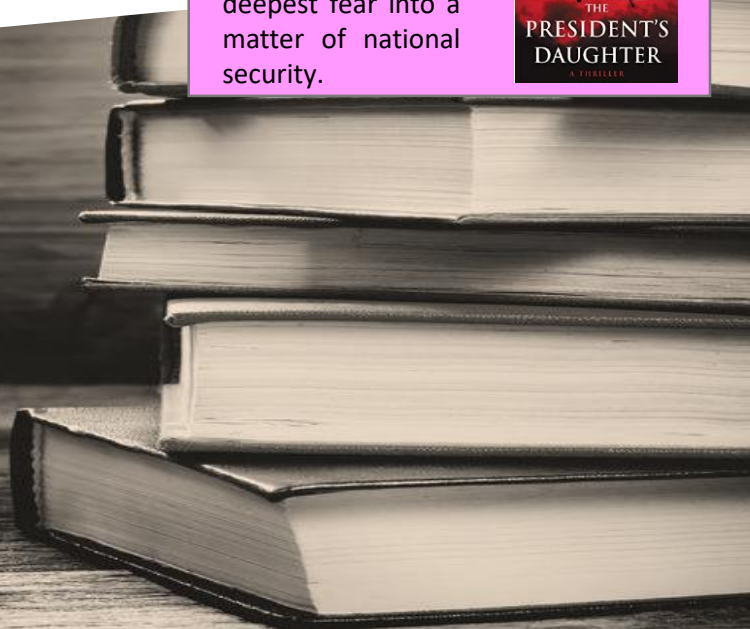
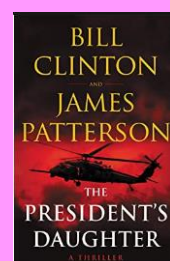
Miss Bolland recommends: *A History of English Food* by Clarissa Dickson Wright

This explores the history of our food from the Middle Ages to the end of the 1900s. Each era has its own chapter and includes historical information and recipes.



Mr. Janes recommends: *The President's Daughter* by James Patterson and Bill Clinton

A madman abducts Keating's teenage daughter, Melanie—turning every parent's deepest fear into a matter of national security.



# Local Libraries

## Stockton Central Library

Stockton Central library are here to serve the local community and provide a welcoming environment, open and free to all.

A wide variety of books are available to borrow, ranging from novels to local history services.

PCs with free internet access are also available to use, and the library even runs basic ICT courses for those who need a refresher.





# First liners



Can you guess the title of the book from the first line?

1. Mother died today. Or maybe, yesterday; I can't be sure.

2. It was a warm night at Castle Caladan, and the ancient pile of stone that had served the Atrides family as home for twenty-six generations bore that cooled-sweat feeling it acquired before a change in the weather.

3. There was a hand in the darkness, and it held a knife.

The knife had a handle of polished black bone, and a blade finer and sharper than any razor.

4. Howard Roark laughed.

5. All happy families are alike; each unhappy family is unhappy in its own way.

6. This is my favourite book in all the world, though I have never read it.

7. It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness...

8. All children, except one, grow up.

9. You better not tell nobody but God.



# On the road

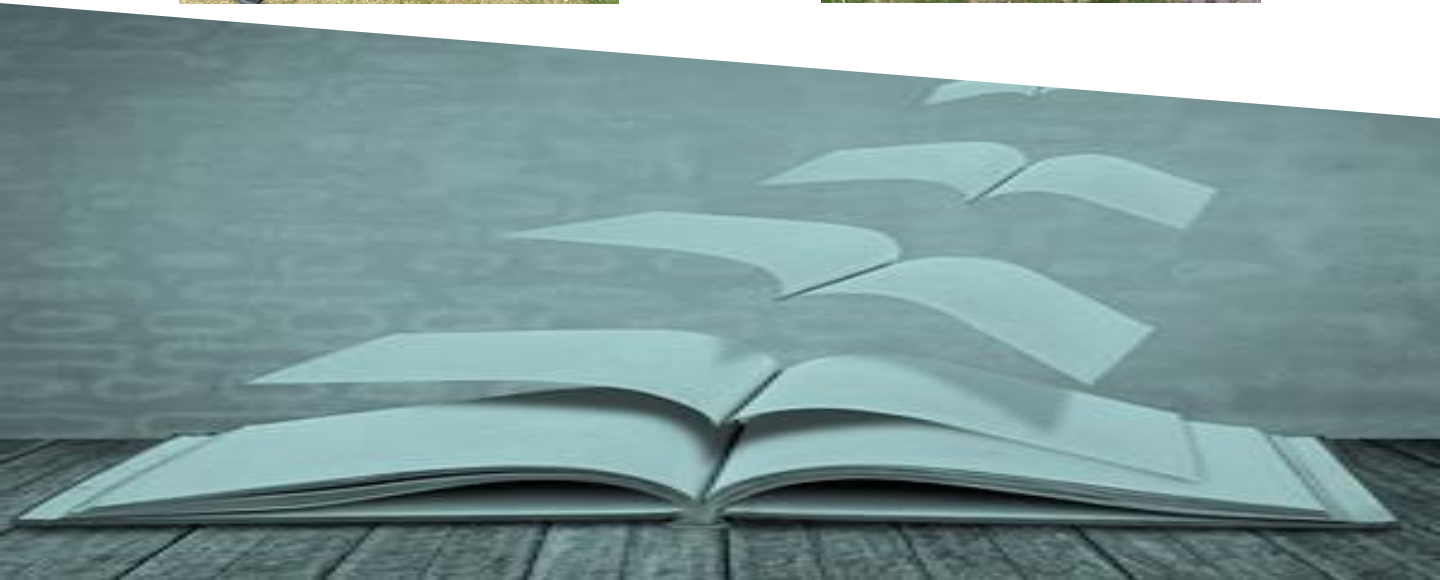


During culture week, pupils from years 7-9 participated in a 'Gothic Writing' trip to Whitby, North Yorkshire.

After a trip up the 199 steps, pupils were given a guided tour around the historic Whitby Abbey. They were shown artefacts from the abbey itself and were given time to explore the stunning surroundings, which date as far back as 657 AD.

Pupils also explored one of the abbey's most famous residents- Count Dracula. They were taken through Bram Stoker's classic novel and were shown where Stoker lived and gained inspiration from the landscape around him. Stoker arrived in the town in 1890 and it is said that he used the atmospheric locations to begin work on what is regarded as one of the best- known novels in history.

Pupils were also given some time to explore the town for their own inspiration, with many of them using the abbey as a starting point for their own narratives. After an ice – cream and fish and chips (of course!) pupils headed home to start work on their own stories.



# Word of the Month

## Saga

(Origin: Old Norse)

A *saga* is a long and complicated story or series of events. *Saga* first referred to ancient Icelandic narratives that tell of legendary figures and events of the heroic age of Norway and Iceland.

The original sagas were Icelandic prose narratives that were roughly analogous to modern historical novels. They were penned in the 12th and 13th centuries, and blended fact and fiction to tell the tales of famous rulers, legendary heroes, and average folks of Iceland and Norway. And they were aptly named: *saga* traces back to an Old Norse root that means "tale." The English word first referred only to those original Icelandic stories, but *saga* later broadened to cover other narratives reminiscent of those, and the word was eventually further generalized to cover any long, complicated scenario.



# Final Notes

Reading is so important to our Academy. The key aim of our reading drive is to encourage Reading for Pleasure. I leave you with the words of Annie Dillard:

**She read books  
as one would  
breathe air, to  
fill up and live.**

—  
*Annie Dillard*



I hope you've enjoyed reading this month's newsletter. As an Academy, we believe you should never be stuck for reading information and recommendations - visit our dedicated reading section on our website for ideas, competitions recommended lists and more. Click on 'Curriculum' and 'Reading' (or click on this link: <https://ianramsey.org.uk/curriculum/reading/>) to uncover a world of books and recommendations and challenges including:

- Book recommendations. These change every term and are thematically linked to all the topics covered by each subject that term.
- Reading challenges
- Desert Island Book lists
- Reading quotes
- Recommend a book

I hope you've enjoyed August's newsletter and look forward to sending you September's edition!

\*Answers to First Lines:

1. The Outsider by Albert Camus
2. Dune by Frank Herbert
3. Emma by Jane Austen
4. The Fountainhead by Ayn Rand
5. Anna Karenina by Leo Tolstoy
6. The Princess Bride by William Goldman
7. A Tale of Two Cities by Charles Dickens
8. Peter Pan by J.M. Barrie
9. The Colour Purple by Alice Walker

