



# Key Stage 5 Wider reading guide for students

Implementing a whole-school approach to reading



**'Excellence in almost any academic subject requires strong reading.'**

*Doug Lemov*



## What is wider reading and why should I do it?

Wider reading is when students, like yourself, independently read different types of texts about certain topics to build their knowledge. For example, you could read books, magazines, newspapers or online articles.

You chose the subjects you are studying, presumably, because you enjoy them and/or you know they will support your application to attend a particular pathway when you move on. Wider reading should therefore be enjoyable; it'll allow you to explore each of your subjects in a really personal way as you select different topics and texts that are of interest to you.

As well as being enjoyable, wider reading should also help you with your studies as it can deepen your awareness and understanding of different areas of your course. Due to this, it can also set you up well for continuing to study or work in a particular subject area. Wider reading, and the knowledge you acquire from it, will help you to think critically about different issues. Admissions tutors, for example, are often impressed by evidence of wider reading as it demonstrates the passion and dedication you have for your chosen subject.

## How can I use this guide?

This guide aims to provide you with a range of ideas for reading widely around different subjects. It is not recommended that you try to read all of the books in the lists, or that you research every topic mentioned. Instead, you should select what you think might be interesting to explore, or topics you don't know much about, and start your wider reading there. That's the point of wider reading – to dip in, explore and see what takes your interest. Hopefully some of the texts or websites listed here will inspire your interest even more. Equally, the suggestions here are by no means exhaustive, you could find your own suggestions or speak to your teachers. Exam boards also usually provide suggested wider reading lists too.

Following up on the advice in this guide will allow you to evidence several key skills to admissions tutors or employers: independent learning, research skills, critical thinking and ability to develop ideas, and therefore an ability to contribute to discussions and debates around different topics in your subject. As well as this, it should show you whether your interest in a particular subject is great enough to want to pursue it after college, as well as allowing you to immerse yourself in something you are passionate about.



## Anthropology

Anthropology is divided between social or cultural anthropology and physical or biological anthropology. There are courses specifically in the former and some overlap with human geography. The latter overlaps with human biology and genetics.

- Who We Are and How We Got Here (Reich)
- The Third Chimpanzee (Diamond)
- Tribe (Bruce Parry)
- A Beginner's Guide to Anthropology (Hendy)
- The Book of Peoples (National Geographic)
- The Innocent Anthropologist (Nigel Barley)
- The Naked Ape (Morris)
- Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind (Harari)
- The World Until Yesterday: What Can We Learn from Traditional Societies? (Diamond)
- The Ceremonial Animal: A New Portrait of Anthropology (James)
- The Origin of Our Species (Stringer)
- Masters of the Planet: The Search for our Human Origins (Tattersal)
- Treasured Possessions: Indigenous Interventions into Cultural and Intellectual Property (Geismar)
- Photography and Anthropology (Pinney)
- Interpreting Landscapes (Tilley)
- The Cell Phone: An Anthropology of Communication (Horst et al.)
- Addiction by Design: Machine Gambling in Las Vegas (Schull and Dow)
- Dancing Skeletons: Life and Death in West Africa (Dettwyler)
- The Woman in the Body (Martin)

As part of your reading, you could do a study of the primates – considering questions such as: what are prosimians, simians and apes? What makes man different and why/how did he develop physical differences? Why are witchcraft and magic important in many tribal cultures?

If you are interested in exploring archaeology alongside this, follow up on areas you are particularly interested in, whether that be British Roman and Anglo-Saxon, Egyptian, Central American or wherever. It would be a good idea to get in touch with a local archaeological society (or Dept. of Archaeology at a nearby university, if it has one) and arrange to spend some time on a dig. There is more science to it than you might think and it would be very useful to familiarise yourself with it.



## Architecture

Largely, your reading will be dictated by your own tastes. You could consider questions such as: what buildings in the world do you prefer and why? You should read around their history and who designed them. There are a number of works comparing English cathedrals, for instance – this is a good place to start, because of the design issues that were faced and overcome by builders of a much earlier age. If there are National Trust properties near you, look at their architecture and research their history, the restoration work and how that is undertaken. During your reading, familiarise yourself with different architectural styles and the work of different architects. Find out whose work most inspires you and consider why this is.

- A History of Architecture in 100 Buildings (Cruikshank)
- The Future of Architecture in 100 buildings (Kushner)
- Modern Architecture Since 1900 (Curtis)
- Why We Build (Moore)
- The Story of Art (Gombrich)
- The Classical Language of Architecture (Summerson)
- The Poetics of Space (Bachelard)
- Space, Time and Architecture (Giedon)
- Structures – or Why Things Don't Fall Down (Gordon)
- How Buildings Learn: What Happens After They're Built (Brand)
- The Meaning of Modern Art, A Philosophical Interpretation (Harries)
- Towards a New Architecture (Le Corbusier)
- Cambridge Architecture, A Concise Guide (Ray)
- The Ethical Architect (Spector)
- Experiencing Architecture (Rasmussen)
- There is no Planet B: A Handbook for the Make or Break Years (Berners-Lee)

As part of your reading, you could research materials science too, sustainability projects and some of the latest research on energy saving and even buildings that have self-regulating and self-correcting control mechanisms.

Useful websites to consider include [www.ted.com](http://www.ted.com), the 'best architecture' websites and [www.architecture.com](http://www.architecture.com) (the Royal Institute of British Architects site). Keep abreast of the Stirling awards, the top prize for architecture in the UK, as this will also help your reading and knowledge around the subject.



## Biology

Biology covers all of human biology, zoology and botany. You need to decide whether you want to explore all aspects of it or just some of it. You might also wish to find out about specialist areas such as virology, microbiology, marine biology and genetics to see whether you'd like to specialise from the beginning or study more generally, before deciding on any more specialist options.

- The Chemistry of Life (Steven Rose)
- Anything by the geneticist Steve Jones or the biologist Richard Dawkins
- Genome (Matt Ridley)
- The Wisdom of the Genes (Wills)
- Life on the Edge: Quantum Biology (Al-Khalili and MacFadden)
- Hacking The Code of Life (Carey)
- Life Ascending (Nick Lane)
- The Revenge of Gaia (Lovelock)
- 50 Genetic Ideas You Really Need to Know (Henderson)
- Zoobiquity (Horowitz and Bowers)
- Creation: The Origin of Life (Rutherford)
- The Sixth Extinction (Kolbert)
- Great Myths of the Brain (Jarrett)
- The Gene – an Intimate History (Mukherjee)
- How We Live and Why We Die (Wolpert)
- Honeybee Democracy (Seeley)
- A Short History of Everything (Bryson)

For websites, you could consider [www.arkive.org](http://www.arkive.org), [www.ted.com](http://www.ted.com) and [www.thenakedscientists.com](http://www.thenakedscientists.com). You could also explore journals such as Nature and New Scientist in particular. Be aware that all scientific journals will have biological items in them that you may need to research. For biochemistry, a good Handbook of Biochemistry/Principles of Biochemistry textbook is useful for back-up reading as you do topics at A Level. For genetics, familiarise yourself with sex-linked conditions, genetic ratios, gene editing and for population genetics the Hardy-Weinberg equilibrium and find out about case studies. For zoology, look at taxonomy (the science of classification – what do 'species' and 'genus' mean?) and at such things as the place of primates within it. Explore articles from newspapers on medical advances and also look at the monthly medical bulletins that PiXL sends to schools.



## Business and Marketing

It is useful to keep up to date with current issues and how they impact businesses; this not only helps your understanding, but may also shed light on areas that are of particular interest to you.

Newspapers, and their accompanying websites, such as The Times ([www.thetimes.co.uk](http://www.thetimes.co.uk)) and the Financial Times ([www.ft.com](http://www.ft.com)) are interesting sources to read and explore regularly. The Week is another useful source as it provides a balanced and well-considered commentary on a range of political, social and economic factors linked to events from the past week. The business section of the BBC website ([www.bbc.co.uk/news/business](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business)) and Business Insider ([www.businessinsider.com](http://www.businessinsider.com)) are also useful websites you can briefly look at every day.

As you explore the variety of sources available, you should consider how the news of the day/week might impact upon local, national and international business.

In addition to this reading, the following books may be of interest, as a starting point in your reading around this subject:

- Brilliant Marketing (Hall)
- The Advertising Concept Book (Barry)
- Guerrilla Marketing (Levinson)
- The Strategy Book (McKeown)
- Strategy (Harvard Business Essentials)
- Adventures of a Global Entrepreneur (Branson)
- Anyone Can Do It (Bannatyne)



## Chemistry

There are specialist variations on the themes from biochemistry and chemical engineering, through to very niche specialisms such as colour chemistry. You may wish to research these and consider which aspects you are most interested in.

- Chemistry of Life (Steven Rose)
- Chemistry (Brock)
- Principles of Biochemistry (White, Handler and Smith)
- Chemistry for Changing Times (Hill, McCreary and Kolb)
- Materials Science (Ramsden)
- The Periodic Kingdom (Atkins)
- Mendeleev's Dream – The Search for the Elements (Strathern)
- Periodic Tables – The Curious Life of the Elements (Aldersty and Williams)
- The Disappearing Spoon (Kean)
- 50 Ideas You Really Need to Know About Chemistry (Birch)
- The Periodic Table – A Field Guide to the Elements (Parsons and Dixon)
- A Short History of Everything (Bryson)

As part of your reading, you could consider exploring the periodicals New Scientist, Nature, Chemistry World and Education in Chemistry. For websites, look at [www.ted.com](http://www.ted.com), [www.thenakedscientists.com](http://www.thenakedscientists.com), [www.isaacchemistry.org](http://www.isaacchemistry.org); you could also search 'chemistry websites' as there are several on different areas of chemistry and from a number of UK and US universities. You may also wish to read other sites to do with biology and material sciences.



## Classics

Classics can be studied without having learned Latin or Greek (or any of the classical languages) beforehand, but you need to think about whether you want to take any of these up at university as part of your course, so you could read around these languages to help you decide.

If you have already explored Classics, consider how many whole texts you have read, in addition to extracts – it would be useful for you to make an effort to read the entire text wherever possible.

- Recent histories such as Mary Beard's *SPQR* are good (indeed anything by her)
- Tom Holland's *Rubicon*, but best is to go back to some of the translated originals – histories such as *The Histories* (Tacitus) or *The 12 Caesars* (Suetonius)
- Any of the Greek plays of Sophocles, Euripides, Aeschylus and Aristophanes, Virgil's *Aeneid* (the translation of Book VI by Seamus Heaney is particularly good) and Lucretius *De Rerum Natura*, which is an astonishing early treatise on the natural world. You could also read Homer's *Iliad* or *Odyssey*, as well as texts by Ovid.

In addition to reading widely amongst the classics, your wider reading would benefit from exploring other resources as well, such as:

- *Brutus: The Noble Conspirator* (Tempest)
- *Greek History: The Basics* (Osborne)
- *Archaic and Classical Greek Art* (Osborne)
- *Linguistics: A Very Short Introduction* (Matthews)
- *The Classical World: An Epic History from Homer to Hadrian* (Lane Fox)
- *Roman Social History* (Terggiari)

You could also discover more about the wider world of Classics by reading the journal *Omnibus* which is produced twice a year by the Classical Association. It contains a range of short articles on aspects of Classics and is free.

Other useful resources include The Perseus Project, a website featuring many Greek and Latin texts in original as well as English translation: <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/> or listening to the podcast series *Ancient Greece Declassified* or the YouTube channel *Kinds and Generals*.





## Computing

A lot of what you could read depends on whether your interest is in computer science or in computer studies or, within that, in specialist areas such as web design, networking, computer animation etc. Reading around these areas will be beneficial to you. Computer science is more about designing the next generation of computer hardware, quantum computing etc so the emphasis is very much upon prowess in physics and maths (and preferably further maths). Where software is more relevant, the emphasis is a little less directly scientific but you will still be expected to have a lot of computer experience.

- Life 3.0 (Tegmark) - discusses what being human will be like in the age of AI.
- Computational Fairy Tales (Kubica)
- Once Upon an Algorithm: How Stories Explain Computing (Erwig)
- Computer Science: An Overview (Brookshear)
- Code: The Hidden Language of Computer Hardware and Software (Petzold)
- The Pattern on the Stone The Simple Ideas That Make Computers Work (Hillis)
- Outnumbered: From Facebook and Google to Fake News and Filter-bubbles – the algorithms that control our lives (Sumpter)
- The Code Book (Singh)
- Algorithmic Puzzles (Levitin and Levitin)

You could also look at websites such as Webopaedia and the IEEE.

Computing courses are mathematical as well, and so you may also like to explore this area too. You could explore problem solving through websites such as [www.ukmt.org.uk](http://www.ukmt.org.uk), or <https://artofproblemsolving.com/resources>, or you may wish to read around the Chalk Dust magazine available here: <https://chalkdustmagazine.com>



## Drama

There are a range of courses and opportunities that you can explore in this subject, depending on whether you are more interested in the academic side of drama and theatre or the practical side. For example, courses range from traditional acting to musical theatre, or there are ones which provide experience of theatre management, technical work or, indeed, work on camera. You may find Freeman's book *So You Want To Go To Drama School* very helpful if you are thinking of continuing your study of this subject after sixth form. Reading around the different areas of drama and theatre will help you to decide which avenue you would rather explore further when you leave sixth form.

Your wider reading could include exploring a range of practitioners such as Artaud, Berkoff, Boal, Brecht, Brook, DV8, Frantic Assembly, Godber, Punchdrunk and Stanislavski. You will be studying practitioners as part of your course, so you may wish to start by reading widely around those you are covering in class. For example, if you are studying Stanislavski, you could read his books *An Actor Prepares*, *Creating A Role* or *Building a Character*. You may wish to then move on to researching practitioners who are not being studied in class, to broaden your knowledge further.

Reading plays will also be of benefit to you. You could start by reading plays by the same playwrights you are studying in class, or you could read plays written in a similar genre or time period to those you're studying in class. In addition to reading different plays and reading about practitioners, you should also research different types of theatre.

In addition to the suggestions above, you may wish to consider exploring the following texts:

- Group Think from *The New Yorker*, by Malcolm Gladwell:  
<http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2002/12/02/group-think>
- *Theatre and Nation* (Holdsworth)
- *Introduction to Production: Creating Theatre Onstage, Backstage and Offstage* (Sutherland-Cohen)
- *The Empty Space* (Brook)
- *Performance Studies: An Introduction* (Schechner)
- *Theatre and Ethics* (Ridout)
- *Do It Yourself Theatre* (Daniels)
- *How Plays Work* (Edgar)
- *Theory/Theatre: An Introduction* (Fortier)
- *The Frantic Assembly Book of Devising Theatre* (Graham and Hogget)
- *The Drama, Theatre and Performance Companion* (Mangan)
- *A Director Prepares: Seven Essays on Art and Theatre* (Bogart)
- *Improvisation and the Theatre* (Johnsone)



## Economics

The Victorian historian Thomas Carlyle, called economics ‘the dismal science’ and that led to the debate as to whether it is a science or a discipline. The further economics is taken, the more mathematical it becomes. You should keep up to date with current economic issues and debates; this is not difficult at the current time, in terms of problems with the global economy. Your reading around this will overlap with politics and debates on taxation, welfare, borrowing, public spending, currency crises, etc. Pick two or three topics from your A Level course (a combination of macro- and micro- economics) and study them in depth.

- Freakonomics (Levitt and Dubner)
- The Lexus and The Olive Tree – A Study of Globalisation (Friedman)
- Should Rich Nations Help the Poor? (Hulme)
- Crashed: How a Decade of Financial Crises Changed the World (Tooze)
- Grave New World – The End of Globalisation (King)
- Hard Times (Clark and Heath)
- Winner Takes All (Moyo)
- The Ascent of Money (Ferguson)
- The Price of Inequality and The Great Divide (Stiglitz)
- End This Depression Now (Krugman)
- How the West Was Lost (Mayo)
- 22 Things They Didn’t tell You About Capitalism (Chang)
- The Undercover Economist (Harford)
- The End of Poverty (Sachs)
- What Money Can’t Buy: The Moral Limits of the Market (Sandel)
- The Very Short Introduction to Marx (Singer)
- WTF: What have we done? Why did it happen? How do we take back control? (Peston)
- The Art of Statistics (Spiegelhalter)
- Doughnut Economics, Seven Ways to Think like a 21st-Century Economist (Raworth)
- Econocracy: The Perils of Leaving Economics to the Experts – (Joe Earle, Cahal Moran and Zach Ward-Perkins)
- Innovation + Equality: How to Create a Future that is More Star Trek than Terminator (Joshua Gans and Andrew Leigh)

Look at websites such as [www.ted.com](http://www.ted.com), [www.economist.com](http://www.economist.com), [www.CNNMoney.com](http://www.CNNMoney.com), [www.econtalk.com](http://www.econtalk.com) and [www.ft.com](http://www.ft.com) (Financial Times site). You could also look at the ideas of current leading thinkers in economics such as Amartya Sen (his theories on foreign aid creating dependency). An interactive way to read widely for this subject would be to ‘give’ yourself a notional £20,000 each year and see how you would invest it and (hopefully) make a profit – best to make this ‘notional’, just in case! You would need to research different investment types from various sources, so this would be a really interesting challenge.



## Engineering

Reading around this subject may help you decide whether you're more interested in certain aspects of engineering than others. For example: civil, mechanical, electrical, aeronautical, etc.). You can choose to specialise straight away, or you may prefer to do 'general engineering' with an introduction to all of them before deciding how to specialise.

- Sustainable Energy – Without the Hot Air (MacKay) – available: <http://www.inference.org.uk/sustainable/book/tex/sewtha.pdf>
- Engineering in Society – (ed. Rob Lawlor) – available: <https://www.raeng.org.uk/publications/reports/engineering-in-society>
- Engineering: A Beginner's Guide (McCarthy)
- The New Science of Strong Materials – or Why You Don't Fall Through the Floor (Gordon)
- The Gecko's Foot: How Scientists are Taking a Leaf from Nature's Book (Forbes)
- Bebop to the Boolean Boogie: An Unconventional Guide to Electronics (Maxfield)
- Invention by Design – How Engineers get from Thought to Thinking (Petroski)
- To Engineer is Human: The Role of Failure in Successful Design (Petroski)
- Pushing the Limits: New Adventures in Engineering (Petroski)
- Why Buildings Fall Down (Levy and Salvadori)
- The Science of Formula 1 Design (Tremayne)
- The Simple Science of Flight (Tennekes)
- Seven Wonders of the Industrial World (Cadbury)
- The Existential Pleasures of Engineering (Florman)
- How Things Work – The Physics of Everyday Life (Bloomfield)
- Advanced Design and Technology (Norman, et al.)

For further research, you could explore the following websites:

- [www.ted.com](http://www.ted.com)
- [www.discoverengineering.org](http://www.discoverengineering.org)
- [www.raeng.org.uk](http://www.raeng.org.uk) (the Royal Academy of Engineering site)

There are also lots of websites associated with the different disciplines within engineering and reading around these will help you to decide which you are most interested in. Keep abreast of major engineering projects, such as airport expansion, HS2, motorway widening, new bridges, etc as well.



## English

What you should read for English very much depends on what you are interested in. Some people will prefer studying the English language and may consider reading more widely around this and linguistics; others prefer the study of literature. Your wider reading will therefore stem from where your interests lie, or avenues that maybe you haven't come across before and therefore wish to find out more about.

As an example, to read quite broadly around literature, you could choose one or two novelists, one or two poets (admissions tutors are always mentioning that too few candidates have much knowledge of poetry), one or two playwrights and you should also aim to ensure that these are from more than one period of history. You should aim to experiment and dip into different genres of literature and find out what really excites you to read more. Reading other texts by the authors you studied for GCSE, or are doing so for A Level, will give you different perspectives on their work and allow you to make interesting comparisons. You could also read other texts in the genres these were in, or from the same time periods, so you can gain a sense of the wider contexts.

In addition to this, you may wish to start reading around literary theory, or conversational theories if you haven't already.

If your interests are more language course-based, then you may wish to explore language in more depth. You could start by exploring the units of work you have found most interesting this year, such as children's language development or language diversity. You should also explore a range of textual variations and representations so, similarly to the literature example above, you should read around a variety of subjects, writers or speakers, texts for different audiences and purposes, as well as exploring a range of genres, time periods, places etc.

Unsurprisingly for English, the advice is 'read, read, read' but make it for pleasure. Your teacher may be able to provide you with a copy of the PiXL Key Stage 5 Reading Canon Selection Guide which contains a wide variety of fiction and non-fiction texts from different writers exploring a wide range of issues which you may find interesting. There are also good discussions of literary topics in the archive of the radio programme *In Our Time*, which is available on iPlayer.



## French

Reading in French not only allows you to immerse yourself in the French language, widening your vocabulary and knowledge of grammar, but it also allows you to deepen your understanding of its fascinating history and rich culture. At university, you will study in-depth the wider culture of Francophonie in the many countries across the globe where French is spoken. You will also study the varied history, literature and cinema in which the language is embedded.

Get into a routine of reading anything that interests you: online blogs, adverts, newspapers, poetry and literary works. Keep a note-book handy to jot down any new vocabulary you learn and remember that you do not have to look up every unknown word. Use your ability to decode and derive meaning of unfamiliar language. Do not just limit your reading to France: find out about other French-speaking countries too, as this will be a big part of your further French studies. Watching French films, with French subtitles on, is a great way to improve your knowledge of new language, grammar and phonics as you are watching, listening and reading at the same time.

Invest in a good a grammar book and bilingual dictionary (such as Collins/Robert Bilingual Dictionary) so that you can keep strengthening your knowledge of grammar with practice. *A Comprehensive French Grammar*, G.Price 2007 is a useful one and the workbook to go with this is: *A French Grammar Workbook*, D. Engel, G. Evans and V. Howells 1998

### Newspapers and Magazines

- [French Newspapers : Newspapers from France : French News : Journaux Français : Europe \(onlinenewspapers.com\)](#)
- [L'Obs - Actualités du jour en direct \(nouvelobs.com\)](#)
- [Le Point – Actualité Politique, Monde, France, Économie, High-Tech, Culture](#)
- [Télérama.fr : programme TV, séries TV, films de la semaine, sorties sur Paris et toute l'actualité culturelle \(telerama.fr\)](#)
- [France Football , toute l'actualité du football](#)
- [Science & Vie: premier magazine européen de l'actualité scientifique - Science & Vie \(science-et-vie.com\)](#)
- [Conservatoire Numérique des Arts et Métiers \(cnam.fr\)](#)
- [Auto Journal - Essais de voitures, voiture neuve - Tous les plaisirs de l'automobile](#)
- [Santé Magazine, le féminin qui fait du bien ! | Santé Magazine \(santemagazine.fr\)](#)
- [Canard PC – Le magazine en ligne des jeux vidéo, hardware et jeux de plateau](#)
- [Paris Match](#)

**Literature:** Here are some of the classics that you may want to dip in to.

- *The New Oxford Companion to Literature in French*, P. France ed. 1995
- *L'Être et Le Néant*, Jean-Paul Sartre 1943
- *L'Étranger*, Albert Camus 1942
- *La Porte Étroite*, André Gide 1909
- *Le Deuxième Sexe*, Simone de Beauvoir 1949
- *Poèmes Saturniens*, Paul Verlaine 1867
- *Les Petits Enfants du Siècle*, Christiane Rochefort 1961
- *L'École des Femmes*, Molière 173



## Geography

Through wider reading, you will probably come to decide whether you are a 'whole' geographer or whether you are interested more in the physical side of the subject or the human. As you continue to explore, the interests you develop will determine what you may want to specialise in and read about further. You could choose two or three topics from your work in Year 12 and go into greater depth in them, to help start you off.

- Earth, An Intimate History (Fortey)
- Globalism and Regionalism and Capitalism as if the Earth Mattered (Porritt)
- Future Shock (Tofler)
- A Blueprint for Survival (The Ecologist and Penguin books)
- Population Geography (Jones)
- The Skeptical Environmentalist (Lomberg – indeed anything by him)
- Jungle: A Harrowing True Story of Survival (Ghinsberg)
- Surviving Extremes (Middleton – he teaches Geography at Oxford)
- Earth From Space (Johnston)
- Belching Out the Devil: Global Adventures with Coca-Cola (Thomas)
- Anything by James Lovelock on Gaia, and for the human and cultural side
- Tribe (Bruce Parry)
- Anything by the Professor of Geography at UCLA, Jared Diamond
- Caesar's Last Breath – the epic story of the air around us (Kean)
- For those interested in geology: Reading Rocks (Maddox)
- Building Global Resistance (Pagett) This is a searing critique of current development strategies
- Factfulness (Rosling)
- Prisoners of Geography (Marshall)

You could read the Geography Review for case studies, become a junior member of the Royal Geographical Society and consult [www.mongabay.com](http://www.mongabay.com) for environmental geography reading material. Look at the website of Danny Dorling for lots of statistical material and his book So You Think You Know About Britain may also be of interest to you.

You can get other ideas from [www.gapminder.org](http://www.gapminder.org), [www.facingthefuture.org](http://www.facingthefuture.org), [www.ted.com](http://www.ted.com) and [www.gogeo.ac.uk](http://www.gogeo.ac.uk). Through your reading, you should also keep up to date with natural disasters and their causes.



## History

What you do by way of wider reading may depend on the period(s)/topics you are studying or whether you just want to dip into because something sounds interesting to you. There are a number of books on the nature of history and historiography that you may be interested in. One way to get started with wider reading is to choose a couple of key events/people or overviews/themes that interest you (you could start with those from your A Level work, if you wish) and use wider reading to go into them in more depth as 'specialist subjects'.

Widen your reading to experience the history of different countries and time periods. For example, if you are studying the history of America, as well as reading about what you are studying, you may wish to read about the history of Russia or China at the same time. You might also like to read about a different time period. For example, if you are studying 16<sup>th</sup> century Britain, you may wish to find out what happens in the 12<sup>th</sup> or 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. You could also look at political philosophy and/or one or two political biographies and also read book reviews – that way, you hear what the book says and the views of the reviewer.

Here are just a few ideas from the wide variety of books that are available:

- The Story of China (Wood)
- America, - A Narrative History (G B Tindall, D E Shi)
- The 'Hitler Myth': Image and Reality in the Third Reich (Sir I Kershaw)
- The Time Traveller's Guide to Medieval England - there are a series of these (Mortimer)
- The Winter King – Henry VII (Penn)
- Silk Roads (Frankopan)
- The Celts (Roberts)
- The Romanovs (Montefiore)

Your teacher is likely to have detailed reading lists that compliment your course, so have a read of some of the books they recommend. Exam boards usually have comprehensive reading and resource lists too, with some additional reading material for every topic in their specification, so you may wish to consult these as well.

As you explore, ensure you're reading different research, different types of evidence and documents and discussing what you discover. Your reading will expand your knowledge of the past, give you confidence to make reasoned arguments and help you to understand the complex ideas/interpretations that exist in history.





## Law

You may enjoy dipping into different areas of law. You could start by looking at general introductions to different areas of law such as human rights law, contract law, tort, criminal, land law, etc. Exploring introductions in this way may help you to see which areas you find more interesting. Some recommendations for this would include the Very Short Introduction To... series, e.g. ...to Human Rights (Clapham), ... to the Philosophy of Law (Wacks) and the New Penguin Guide to the Law. Constitutional Law and Land Law come with a health warning of being particularly technical!

Most law books can be a bit intimidating, as they are full of terminology, so go easy to start with.

- The Justice Game by Robertson - This is an excellent and very readable book by someone who has been involved in some of the leading human rights trials of the last 50 years.
- Getting into Law (ed. Lygo)
- The Search for Justice (Rozenburg)
- Understanding Law (Adams and Brownsword)
- Law and Modern Society (Atiyah)
- On Evidence (Murphy – just dip into this)
- The Rule of Law (Bingham)
- Bonfire of the Liberties: New Labour, Human Rights (Ewing)

There are two radio programmes that are very good and there are podcasts of them on iPlayer; these are Law in Action and Unreliable Evidence. Useful websites are [www.ted.com](http://www.ted.com), [www.lawstudent.tv](http://www.lawstudent.tv), [www.lawcom.gov.uk](http://www.lawcom.gov.uk) (for Law Commission reports) and the [www.guardian.com/law/studying-law](http://www.guardian.com/law/studying-law). You could also research campaign groups, such as Liberty and the Howard League for penal reform.



## Mathematics

Maths departments at universities are interested in the maths you've done, so the more you do the better – further maths, further maths, STEP level papers, etc.

In addition to this, you could explore the following books which may of interest to you if you are a keen mathematician!

- Fermat's Last Theorem (Singh)
- Does God Play Dice and Nature's Numbers (Stewart)
- Easy as Pi (Ivanov)
- The Music of the Primes (du Sautoy)
- Just Six Numbers (Rees)
- In Code (Flannery)
- Numbers, Sets and Axioms (Hamilton)
- The Universe and the Teacup – the Maths of Truth and Beauty (K.C. Cole)
- Algebra and Geometry (Beardon)
- Hidden Connections, Double Meanings (Wells)
- Elastic Fishponds. The Maths that governs our World (Elwes)
- The Norm Chronicles (Blastland and Spitgethaltes)
- Our Mathematical Universe (Te.g.mark)
- Beyond Infinity (Cheng)
- Weapons of Math Destruction (O'Neill)
- Ian Stewart's 17 Equations that Changed the World and Thinking in Numbers (Temmet)



## Medicine

The key thing with medicine is to show that you have the personal qualities they are looking for, as well the academic ones. That means getting as much experience as you can of working with others who are in some way or other requiring help. Your teachers will be able to advise you on this, or you could ask to have access to PiXL Gateway materials and the PiXL Medics bulletins, which are released every month, so that you can read widely around different medical topics.

Keep up to date with any news items on new medical discoveries and break-throughs. You could join the junior BMA, read the BMJ (British Medical Journal) and look at the GMC's Tomorrow's Doctors. By watching medical related videos on [www.ted.com](http://www.ted.com), you may find other areas that you'd like to read about.

- Do No Harm (Marsh)
- When Breath Becomes Air (Kalanithi)
- Fall Down Seven times, Get Up Eight (Higashida)
- A Very Short Introduction to Medical Ethics (Short introductory series)
- The Rise and Fall of Modern Medicine (Le Fanu)
- War Doctor (Nott), The Language of Kindness: A Nurse's Story (Watson)
- The Emperor of All Maladies – a biog. of cancer (Mukherjee)
- NHS SOS (Davis and Tullis)
- The Political Economy of Health Care (Tudor Hart)
- Being Mortal (Gawande)
- Causing Death and Saving Lives (Glover)
- How Doctors Think (Groopman)
- Diagnosis: Dispatches from the Frontlines of Medical Mysteries (Sanders)
- Bad Pharma (Goldacre)
- So you want to be a Doctor (Dev and Metcalfe)

For pharmacy, you could read anything by Ben Goldacre and check out his website.

For optometry, you could read A Very Short Introduction to the Eye (Lund) or The Eye Book (Grierson) and The Ophthobook (Tim Root).



## Music

What you read about will very much depend upon what drives you as a musician and what you wish to study further, so it is important to have a clear idea about what you want to focus on. It may be that you'd like to follow a more general route, or you may wish to specialise in performing, composing or in certain genres of music such as film music, classical music, jazz or even music therapy. Reading around these areas, as well as exploring the practical elements, will help you decide what interests you.

- Oxford History of Western Music (Taruskin)
- The Rest is Noise (Ross)
- Musicology: The Key Concepts (Beard and Gloag)
- Interpreting Popular Music (Brackett)
- Music: A Very Short Introduction (Cook)
- Music Therapy: Understanding the Science of Sound (Fauble)
- What's That Sound? An Introduction to Rock and Its History (Covach)

Aside from reading around the subject, it is crucial that you listen to a wide range of music across different styles and genres.

If you are interested in a particular style or genre of music, it is important that you read about, and listen to, a wide range of compositions from that time period and in a similar style. For example, if you wish to talk about the Baroque period, then an understanding of conventions of the time is important, as well as the differing musical characteristics of composers of the time, as Handel, Bach, Vivaldi, Purcell and more all had their own compositional identities. Likewise, if you wish to continue to study jazz, then an understanding of the evolution of jazz and its origins is obviously important, as well as how different artists contributed to the development of the genre in different ways.



## Physical Education

There are lots of different pathways in physical education and sport to suit individual interests, as well as specialist areas to support with specific career pathways. Specialist areas come from four main areas within sport: the science behind sport, the psychology behind sport, the performance of sport and the development of sport. Once you begin studying a specific degree area, you can continue to specialise further to develop key skills and engage more deeply with areas of interest. It would be beneficial to read around these areas and consider which may be of most interest to you.

### Sport Science and Sport Psychology:

- Sport Science: A Complete Introduction (Rea)
- Sport and Exercise Science: An Introduction by Dean, Sewell, Murray, Griffin and Philip Watkins
- Biomechanics of Sport and Exercise (Merton McGinnis)
- Essentials of Performance Analysis in Sport (Hughes and Franks)
- An Introduction to the Physics of Sports (McInnes Spathopoulos)
- Peak: The New Science of Athletic Performance That is Revolutionising Sports (Bubbs)
- Sports Gene: Inside the Science of Extraordinary Athletic Performance (Epstein)
- Applied Anatomy and Biomechanics in Sport (Ackland and Elliott)
- Clinical Sports Medicine (Brukner and Khan)
- The Champion's Mind: How Great Athletes Think, Train and Thrive (Afrenow)
- Sport, Exercise and Performance Psychology (Robbins and Madrigal)
- Performance Psychology: A Practitioner's Guide (Abbott and Richards)
- Sport Psychology: A Complete Introduction (Perry)
- Applied Sport Psychology: A Case-based Approach (Hemmings and Holder)
- Advancements in Mental Skills Training (Maurizio)

### Sports Development and Physical Education

- Sport Development: Policy, Process and Practice (Hylton)
- Sport for Development. What game are we playing? (Coalter)
- Foundations of Sport Development (Mackintosh)
- The Politics of Sports Development: Development of Sport or Development Through Sport? (White and Houlihan)
- Sport Pedagogy: An Introduction to Teaching and Coaching (Armour)

You could also explore scientific and psychological experiments, such as that by Malm (2019), Evans (2020) and other research which is being done. You could consider key questions such as: How does anxiety affect sports performance? Or how do we aid performance using energy-based products? There are podcasts and TED talks about the world of sport and how performance is affected. The Sports Psychology Podcast: Get Psyched for Sport provides an insight into the world of sport and how we use mental toughness to provide top level performances. Websites such as [www.sportengland.org](http://www.sportengland.org) and National Governing Body websites highlight areas that need developing and how sport is funded.



## Physics

Physics can be explored as a general subject, but there are also specialist areas such as astrophysics, nuclear physics, astronomy etc. that can be studied straightaway or specialised in during years two and three of some courses. It would be beneficial to read around these areas and consider which may be of most interest to you.

- The Physics of the Impossible and Parallel Worlds (Kaku)
- Hyperspace (Khan)
- Smashing Physics: Inside the World's Biggest Experiment (Butterworth)
- Seven Brief Lessons on Physics (Rovelli)
- Chaos (Gleich)
- Quantum (Kumar)
- How to Teach Quantum Physics to your Dog (Orzel)
- 50 Physics Ideas You Really Need to Know (Baker)
- The Ele.g.ant Universe (Greene)
- Just Six Numbers (Rees)
- About Time (Frank)
- The Wonders of the Solar System (Brian Cox - anything by him is good)
- An Astronaut's Guide to Life on Earth (Hadfield)
- A Space Traveller's Guide to the Solar System (Thompson)
- Ripples in Spacetime (Schilling)
- Calculating the Cosmos (Stewart)
- The Ascent of Gravity (Chown)
- A Short History of Everything (Bryson)

During your reading, you could look at New Scientist and Scientific American, if you can get hold of it. For websites look at [www.ted.com](http://www.ted.com), [www.thenakedscientists.com](http://www.thenakedscientists.com), [www.galaxyzoo.com](http://www.galaxyzoo.com), Google physics websites such as The Physics Classroom, The Student Room etc. and the website of the Institute of Physics [www.isaacphysics.org](http://www.isaacphysics.org).



## Politics or Politics, Philosophy and Economics

- The Origins of Political Order (Fukuyama)
- The Spectre at the Feast (Gamble)
- The Establishment and How They Get Away With It (Owen Jones)
- British Politics (Madgwick)
- Mind The Gap (Mount)
- The Politics Book (Kelly)
- It hasn't taken long for books to come out on Brexit - After Europe (Krastev) is good.
- Political autobiographies are interesting, though biased.

In terms of philosophy, Plato's Gorgias is a very good starting point as it's short and examines just two key themes: 'oratory is deceit' and 'might is right'. It does so very clearly and is a good introduction to the 'Socratic method'. You might like to take a theme such as 'truth' and look at how different philosophers have viewed it – What is Good? by A.C. Grayling is a very good starting point. You might be interested in taking a look at such 'isms' as Fascism, Communism, Totalitarianism, etc. – this would particularly link with an interest in history. Peter Cave has produced How to Outwit Aristotle. Julian Baggini's Do You Think What You Think You Think? is excellent and more recent books to consider exploring are The Philosophical Life (Miller) and What do we really know? (Blackburn)

For websites, you could look at [www.ted.com](http://www.ted.com), [www.politicsinspires.com](http://www.politicsinspires.com), search for philosophy websites and you may also be interested in The Philosophers' Magazine or Philosophy Today. There are hundreds of politics sites, depending on your interests. For economics, see the separate section earlier in the booklet.

During your reading, you should aim to keep up to date with current political issues. You should know who the key members of the cabinet and opposition are and what they are proposing. For foreign political awareness, choose an area such as US or European politics or the politics, or another area that really interests you, such as Africa, Asia or South America and familiarise yourself with the key issues there. You will find useful reading opportunities in newspapers, as well as online.



## Psychology

There are lots of specialist areas within psychology, so you may wish to read around these to explore which you find most interesting and therefore which areas you might like to pursue further. For example: clinical, cognitive, developmental, forensic, social, sports etc.

- The Gendered Brain (Rippon)
- Understand Psychology (Hayes)
- Games People Play (Berne)
- I'm OK, You're OK (Thomas Harris)
- The Serial Killers: the Psychology of Violence (Wilson)
- 50 Psychology Ideas You Really Need to Know (Furnham)
- Tricks of the Mind (Derren Brown)
- Anything by Oliver Sacks
- Mindsight (Siegel)
- The Skeleton Cupboard - The Making of a Clinical Psychologist (Byron)
- Psy-Q (Ambridge)
- Predictably Irrational (Anely)
- Bounce (Syed)
- The Element (Ken Robinson)

During your reading, you could look at experimental work, such as that by Milgram, and other research which is being done at the moment. You could also consider questions such as: how do phobias arise? Why are people 'cruel'? Is there such a thing as a criminal mind?





**Religious Studies** Religious Studies can encompass a range of subjects within it, such as philosophy (either philosophy of religion or a broader scope), logic and critical thinking. Ethics can include ethical theories as well as applied ethics, which considers a range of different contemporary issues. Most university courses involving an element of research will require you to consider ethical implications and some courses, such as social studies or medicine, will involve a deeper consideration. Courses focusing on religion can include theology, applied theology, or theology for ministry, as well as those with an even narrower focus on particular issues, such as divinity, theology and counselling, or worship.

**Philosophy:**

- Gaarder, J. *Sophie's World*
- Davies, B. *An Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion*
- Dawkins, R. *The God Delusion*
- Hansell, N. *The Sage Train*
- Annas, J. *An Introduction to Plato's Republic*
- Warburton, N. *A Little History of Philosophy*

**Ethics:**

- Vardy, P. *The Puzzle of Ethics*
- Vardy, P. and Vardy, C. *Ethics Matters*
- Norman, R. *The Moral Philosophers*

**Religious Thought:**

- McGrath, A. *Christianity: An Introduction*
- Page, N. *History of Christianity*
- Vardy, P. *The Puzzle of God*
- Crane, T. *The Meaning of Belief*
- Erricker, C. *Buddhism: Teach Yourself*
- Afsaruddin, A. *Contemporary Issues in Islam*
- Cole, O. *Hinduism: an introduction*

You could also listen to *The Moral Maze* on BBC Radio 4; available programmes vary over time but address a range of issues of morality and ethics. Other BBC programmes on BBC Sounds include *Thinking Allowed*, *In Our Time* and *The Global Philosopher*. In addition, you might like to listen to podcasts such as [https://philosophynow.org/podcasts/Free Will and the Brain](https://philosophynow.org/podcasts/Free_Will_and_the_Brain). For religious and ethical dilemmas in action, you could also explore <http://www.philosophyexperiments.com/fatman/>

**The following journals may also be useful:**

- *The Philosophers' Magazine*
- [Philosophy Now](#)
- *Think*
- [Dialogue](#): for Philosophy of Religion and Ethics
- [Philosophy Compass](#): more in-depth survey articles



## Sociology

Sociology is a fascinating subject which explores a wide range of topics. At sixth form, topics tend to be focused on a few key areas, whereas at university a much wider range of topic areas are explored. Research in sociology often focuses upon inequalities and social phenomena; this means that sociology looks at what is happening in the world around us.

The recommended non-fiction texts below will give you an insight into the modern history, politics and inequalities which are associated with ethnicity, gender and social class. The podcasts explore issues around identity and key studies in sociology. Brixton and Shreds explain two significant events in the relationship between the Black-Caribbean community and the police. The websites are focused on knowledge and topics that you will study at A Level.

### Non-fiction texts

- Chavs: The Demonization of the Working Class (Jones)
- A History of Modern Britain (Marr)
- Prisoners of Geography: Ten Maps That Tell You Everything You Need to Know About Global Politics (Marshall)
- Everyday Sexism (Bates)
- Why I'm No Longer Talking to White People about Race (Eddo-Lodge)

### Podcasts

- The Sociology Show Podcast [The Sociology Show | Spreaker](#)
- Thinking Allowed Podcast [BBC Radio 4 - Thinking Allowed - Downloads](#)
- Brixton: Flames on the Frontline [BBC Radio 4 - Thinking Allowed - Downloads](#)
- Shreds: Murder in the Docks [BBC Sounds - Shreds: Murder in the dock](#)

### Websites

- [Sociology Central: links](#)
- [The Sociology Guy – Helping students understand society](#)
- <https://hecticteachersalevelsociologysite.wordpress.com>
- [ReviseSociology – A level sociology revision – education, families, research methods, crime and deviance and more!](#)



## Spanish

Wider reading can make a substantial difference to your knowledge of the Spanish language, but also to what you know about the culture of Spanish-speaking countries. As you explore more texts, you'll experience new words and grammar, as well as different ways of using the language you already know. The good news is that there are endless resources that can help develop your knowledge of language and culture, so you can select the ones that fit your interests. The study of music, for example, can provide a close look into society, as well as language trends. If you enjoy cinema, watching films or series in Spanish can help you gain insight into a wide range of topics, ranging from history to science, popular culture or art. You could add support by using Spanish or English subtitles, or even by watching in English first and then re-watching in Spanish.

Whilst you are doing this, continue annotating new words and expressions and keep a glossary. You can do this on paper or online. You will maximise recall if you test yourself on these words regularly as it will take a number of uses of each word for them to become part of your active vocabulary.

Give your knowledge of the language structure by continuing to learn and practise your grammar. There are a number of resources that you can use to do this. Find one that works for you and make it your own by using the study skills that you have learnt so far.

### Language learning:

- J. Butt and C. Benjamin, *A New Reference Grammar of Modern Spanish*
- Luis Aragonés, Ramón Palencia, *Gramática De Uso Del Español C1-C2 Teoría Y Práctica, Con Solucionario*

### Texts:

- Raymond Carr, *Spain: A History*.
- Edwin Williamson, *A Penguin History of Latin America*.
- Isabel Allende, *Cuentos de Eva Luna*
- Ramón J. Sender, *Réquiem por un campesino español*.
- Vargas Llosa, *La tía Julia y el escribidor*
- Gabriel García Márquez, *Crónica de una muerte anunciada*.
- Anonymous, *El Lazarillo de Tormes*.
- García Lorca, *Romancero Gitano*.
- Pablo Neruda, *Veinte poemas de amor y una canción desesperada*.
- Calderón de la Barca, *La vida es sueño*.
- *Diccionario de la Real Academia de la Lengua* [www.rae.es/](http://www.rae.es/)
- Spanish newspapers: [www.allyoucanread.com/spanish-newspapers/](http://www.allyoucanread.com/spanish-newspapers/)
- Spanish radio stations: [www.radio.net/language/spanish](http://www.radio.net/language/spanish)
- Spanish YouTube: [www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLA5UloabheFMo9oB\\_AF7JftV34ecOalvM](http://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLA5UloabheFMo9oB_AF7JftV34ecOalvM)
- Spanish learning podcasts: [www.hoyhablamos.com/](http://www.hoyhablamos.com/)
- Instituto Cervantes: <https://londres.cervantes.es/en/default.htm>
- Profedele: <https://www.profedelee.es/>
- Open University free advanced Spanish courses:

### Online resources:



[www.open.edu/openlearn/languages/free/courses?filter=date/grid/603/all/Advanced/all](http://www.open.edu/openlearn/languages/free/courses?filter=date/grid/603/all/Advanced/all)