Reading Against Racism

‘In a racist society it is not enough to be non-racist. We must be anti-racist’
Angela Davis

As the Black Lives Matter movement gathers momentum across the world, now is the time to educate on issues of racial prejudice and discrimination. The English department at Arthur Terry have compiled a reading list that specifically draws attention to the Black experience in America and the U.K. These books range from enlightening history, powerful memoirs, compelling autobiographies and powerful fiction; they all bring invaluable and essential arguments, testimony to an important discourse that we must explore and engage with now and always. We hope you enjoy and take the time to read these fantastic books!

**KS3 and KS4**

**The Hate U Give by Angie Thomas**
Sixteen-year-old Starr Carter moves between two worlds: the poor neighbourhood where she lives and the prep school she attends. Her world is when she witnesses the fatal shooting of her childhood best friend Khalil at the hands of a police officer. Khalil was unarmed.

**Pigeon English by Stephen Kelman**
Recently emigrated from Ghana to London’s enormous housing projects, Harri is pure curiosity. He sets to investigate the murder of one of his classmates and plots to bring the perpetrator to justice.

**To Kill a Mockingbird by Harper Lee**
The bildungsroman is narrated by Scout Finch who tells the story of Tom Robinson, one of the town’s black residents, is falsely accused of raping Mayella Ewell, a white woman. Scout’s father, Atticus agrees to defend him despite threats from the community.

**Dear Martin by Nicole Y. Stone**
Justyce McAllister is top of his class and set for the Ivy League but none of that starts a journal to Dr. King to find out.

**12 Years a Slave by Solomon Northup**
A slave memoir of a black man who was born free in New York state but kidnapped in Washington, D.C., sold into slavery, and kept in bondage for 12 years in Louisiana. He was rescued in 1853, from a cotton plantation near the Red River in Louisiana.

**Natives by Akala**
Covering everything from the police, education and identity to politics, sexual objectification and the far right, Natives speaks directly to British denial and squeamishness when it comes to confronting issues of race and class that are at the heart of the legacy of Britain’s racialised empire.

**Americanah by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie**
Ifemelu and Obinze are young and in love when they depart military-ruled Nigeria for the West. Ifemelu heads for America, where she is forced to grapple with what it means to be black for the first time. Obinze had hoped to join her, but he instead plunges into a dangerous, life in London.

**Beloved by Toni Morrison**
Sethe was born a slave and escaped to Ohio, but eighteen years later she is still not free. Sethe’s house has long been troubled by the angry, destructive ghost of her baby, who died nameless and whose tombstone is engraved with a single word: Beloved.

**Homegoing by Yaa Gyasi**
Sisters, Efia and Esi, are born into different villages in Ghana. Efia is married off to an Englishman and lives in Cape Coast Castle. Esi, is imprisoned beneath her and sold into the Gold Coast’s booming slave trade, and shipped off to America, where her children and grandchildren will be raised in slavery.

**KS5**

**The Color Purple by Alice Walker**
Celie, a young black girl born into poverty and segregation. Raped repeatedly by the man she calls ‘father’, she has two children taken away from her, is separated from her beloved sister Nettie and is trapped into an ugly marriage.

**Six Years a Slave by Solomon Northup**
Born into poverty and slavery, Northup is sold into the Gold Coast’s booming slave trade, and shipped off to America, where his children and grandchildren will be raised in slavery.

**Noughts and Crosses by Malorie Blackman**
Sephy is a Cross, a member of the dark-skinned ruling class. Callum is a Nought, a ‘colourless’ member of the underclass who were once slaves to the Crosses. In their world, Noughts and Crosses simply don’t mix but a forbidden romance builds between Sephy and Callum.

**To Sir, With Love by E.R. Braithwaite**
An autobiography of Braithwaite, the black teacher of a class of white streetwise, ruffian youngsters, seniors in an East End London secondary school who slowly and painfully breaks down the barriers of racial prejudice.

**Dear Martin by Nic Stone**
Justyce McAllister is top of his class and set for the Ivy League but none of that matters to the police officer who just put him in handcuffs. Justyce looks to the teachings of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. for answers. But do they hold up anymore? He starts a journal to Dr. King to find out.

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