

## Text Overview: Tutor Reading Programme



Year 8		
Text & Study Link	Short Summary	Key Themes
<p><b>Starseeker</b> Tim Bowler (2002) <a href="https://www.timbowler.co.uk/books/starseeker/">https://www.timbowler.co.uk/books/starseeker/</a></p>	<p><i>'Good hands, Luke. Special hands. Strong and sensitive. You can do anything you want with hands like these. So don't ever put them to bad use.'</i> Dad was right. Luke does have good hands. Good for playing the piano, like Dad himself used to do, and good for climbing trees – to find some peace and get away from all the troubles at home. Now Skin and the gang want him to do some climbing, too. They want him to break into Mrs Little's house and steal the jewellery box. They want him to prove that he's got what it takes. That he's part of the gang. But Luke is seeking more than just a jewellery box. He's seeking answers to a mystery that has been growing deeper and more disturbing by the day. A mystery that is threatening to overwhelm him. What he finds is something so unexpected it will change his life forever.</p>	<p><i>adolescence, grief, healing, music</i></p>
<p><b>Mud, Sweat and Tears</b> Bear Grylls (2011)</p>	<p>Bear Grylls is a man who has always loved adventure. After leaving school, he spent months hiking in the Himalayas as he considered joining the Indian Army. Upon his return to England after a change of heart, he passed SAS selection and served with 21 SAS for three years. During this time, he broke his back in several places in a free-fall parachuting accident and it was questionable whether he would ever walk again. However, after months of rehabilitation, focusing always on his childhood dream of climbing Everest, he slowly became strong enough to attempt the ultimate ascent of the world's highest peak. At 7.22 a.m. on 26 May 1998, Bear entered the Guinness Book of Records as the youngest Briton to have successfully climbed Everest and returned alive. He was only twenty-three years old and this was only the beginning of his extreme adventures. Now, for the first time and in his own words, this is the gripping story of his action packed life.</p>	<p><i>childhood, survival, perseverance, dedication</i></p>
<p><b>Northern Lights</b> Philip Pullman (1995) <a href="http://www.sparknotes.com/lit/hisdarkmaterials/">http://www.sparknotes.com/lit/hisdarkmaterials/</a></p>	<p>Lyra and her animal daemon live a carefree life amongst the scholars of Jordan College, Oxford. Yet the destiny that awaits her will take her far from her home, to the magical frozen lands of the Arctic, amongst the witch-clans and ice-bears. Here, she will discover the truth about her identity, which will have immeasurable consequences reaching beyond her own world. This extraordinary fantasy is the first book in Philip Pullman's multi-award winning His <i>Dark Materials</i> trilogy. Exciting, original and enormously powerful it is an incredible feat of imagination, and one of the classics of 20th century children's literature.</p>	<p><i>will and grace, freedom through knowledge, love and maturity</i></p>
<p><b>The Other Side of Truth</b> Beverley Naidoo (2000) <a href="https://www.enotes.com/topics/the-other-side-of-truth">https://www.enotes.com/topics/the-other-side-of-truth</a></p>	<p>This is the story of 12 year-old Sade and her brother Femi who flee to Britain from Nigeria. Their father is a political journalist who refuses to stop criticising the military rulers in Nigeria. Their mother is killed and they are sent to London, with their father promising to follow. Abandoned at Victoria Station by the woman paid to bring them to England as her children, Sade and Femi find themselves alone in a new, often hostile, environment. Seen through the eyes of Sade, the novel explores what it means to be classified as 'illegal' and the difficulties which come with being a refugee.</p>	<p><i>Tolerance, freedom of speech, prejudice, coming of age, asylum</i></p>
<p><b>The Graveyard Book</b> Neil Gaiman (2008) <a href="https://www.enotes.com/topics/the-graveyard-book">https://www.enotes.com/topics/the-graveyard-book</a></p>	<p>After the grisly murder of his entire family, a toddler wanders into a graveyard where the ghosts and other supernatural residents agree to raise him as one of their own. Nobody Owens, known to his friends as Bod, is a normal boy. He would be completely</p>	<p><i>death, community, compassion and forgiveness, memory and the past</i></p>

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	normal if he didn't live in a sprawling graveyard, being raised and educated by ghosts, with a solitary guardian who belongs to neither the world of the living nor of the dead. There are dangers and adventures in the graveyard for a boy. But if Bod leaves the graveyard, then he will come under attack from the man Jack—who has already killed Bod's family...	
<b>Tamar</b> <i>Mal Peet (2005)</i> <a href="https://malpeet.com/about-the-book-tamar/">https://malpeet.com/about-the-book-tamar/</a>	When her grandfather dies, Tamar inherits a box containing a series of clues and coded messages. Out of the past, another Tamar emerges, a man involved in the terrifying world of resistance fighters in Nazi-occupied Holland half a century before. His story is one of passionate love, jealousy, and tragedy set against the daily fear and casual horror of the Second World War -- and unravelling it is about to transform Tamar's life forever.	<i>Love, espionage, betrayal</i>
<b>A Kestrel for a Knave</b> <i>Barry Hines (1968)</i>	Life is tough and cheerless for Billy Casper, a troubled teenager growing up in the small Yorkshire mining town of Barnsley. Treated as a failure at school, and unhappy at home, Billy discovers a new passion in life when he finds Kes, a kestrel hawk. Billy identifies with her silent strength and she inspires in him the trust and love that nothing else can, discovering through her the passion missing from his life. Barry Hines's acclaimed novel continues to reach new generations of teenagers and adults with its powerful story of survival in a tough, joyless world.	<i>family relationships, poverty, education, weaknesses, hidden strengths</i>