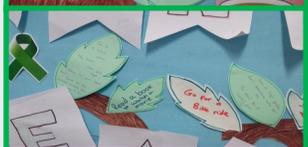
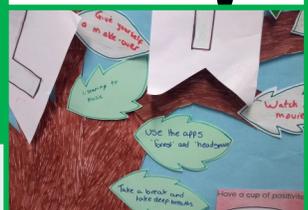




Mindful May



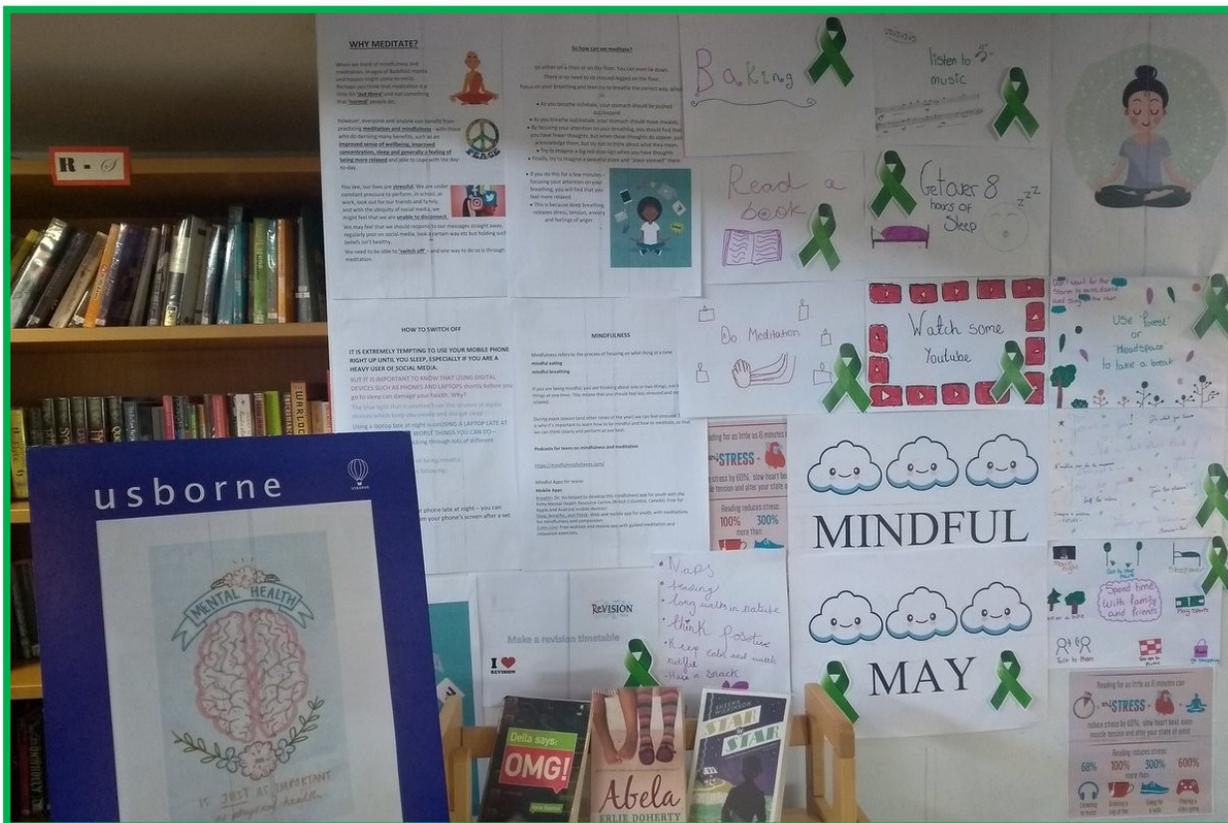
Mindful May



With **exam season** upon us, and **Mental Health Awareness Week** coinciding with the start of the **GCSE examinations**, we decided to make **May** a month of positive mental health promotion in the **LRC**.

Upon entering the library, students can look to the Mindfulness Tree display for tips and advice from our junior librarian team on how to relax and re-charge between revision sessions.

Visitors to the library will also find other suggestions on how to boost their mental health, on our relaxation hacks display, which can be found towards the back of the LRC, with great tips, ideas and strategies from our student librarians and other library regulars.



Left: our relaxation hacks and Mindful May display

Did you know? The Green Ribbon is the international symbol for Mental Health Awareness

Below: tips from our junior librarians on what you can do to boost your mental health

THE POWER OF READING

One of several infographics displayed on the walls of the library is one that highlights just how effective reading is in reducing stress levels. Various studies have proven that reading is **THE** best activity if you're feeling stressed and while it might seem contradictory to read for fun during exam time, rest assured, losing yourself in a book can be the ultimate relaxation. (Of course, meditation and intensive exercise can produce similar effects—alleviating stress, anxiety and tension.)

Reading for as little as **6 minutes** can reduce stress by **68%**, slow heart beat, ease muscle tension and alter your state of mind.

Supposedly, reading can reduce stress:

- **68%** more than listening to music
- **100%** more than drinking a cup of tea
- **300%** more than going for a walk
- **600%** more than playing a video game



GLOBAL READS FOCUS: EAST AND WEST AFRICA

This month's Global Reading has been on East and West African reads.

While most of our books are fiction, we do have a number of **non-fiction books**, focusing name-ly on **Ghana** and **Kenya**.

Fiction reads:

Akata Witch—Nnedi Okorafor (the first in the series and set in Nigeria)

City of Saints and Thieves—Natalie C Anderson (set in Kenya)

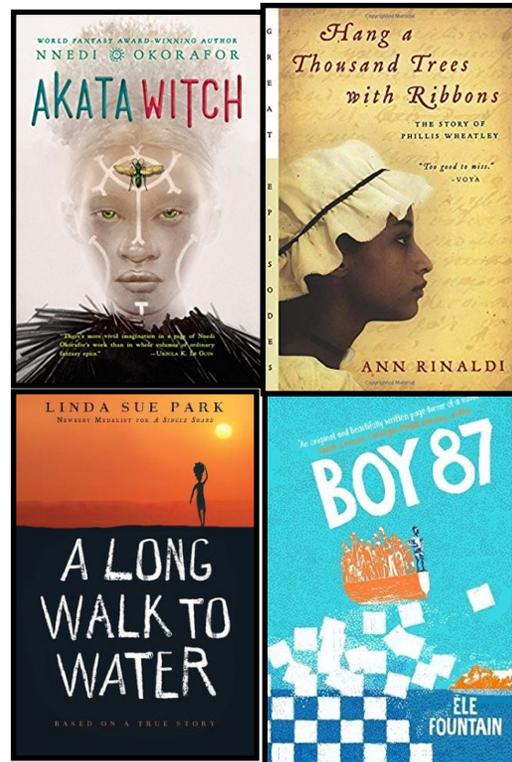
Auma's Long Run—Eucabeth Odhiambo (set in Kenya)

The Good Braider—Terry Farrish (set in the Sudan)

Americanah—Chimamanda Ngazoi Adichie (set in Nigeria and the US)

Children of Blood and Bone—Tomi Adeyemi (the first in a trilogy and written by Nigerian-American author Tomi Adeyemi)

Boy 87—Ele Fountain (set in an unknown Middle Eastern country)



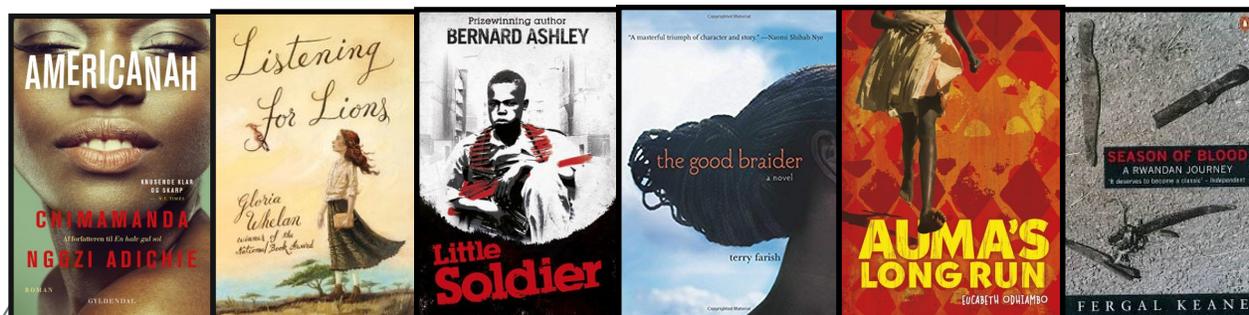
Listening for Lions—Gloria Whelan (set in Kenya)

Little Solider—Bernard Ashley (set in East Africa and London)

Out of Africa—Karen Blixen (also an Academy award-winning film and set in Kenya)

Season of Blood—A Rwandan Journey—Fergal Keane (non-fiction, based on foreign correspondent Fergal Keane's eyewitness of the 1994 Rwandan genocide)

Hang a thousand trees with ribbons—Ann Rinaldi (historical fiction set in Senegal and the US)



RECOMMENDED READS—Global Reads (general)

Boy 87—Ele Fountain

Shif, 14 years old is a talented mathematician, living in an unnamed **Middle Eastern country**, under a corrupt government. His father, a lecturer hasn't been seen in years—after reportedly having suggested that an increase in teachers' salaries could improve the country's education system.

Under this government, young males are required to serve in the army for two years, but Shif's mother knows that most have left, never to be seen again. So she and her neighbour—the mother of Shif's best friend **Bini**—arrange to have their sons smuggled out of the country. Sadly their plans are foiled when police arrive at their respective houses, in the early hours of the morning of the boys' planned departure.

Shif and **Bini** are transported in a lorry to an unknown destination—which they later learn is the middle of a desert, and locked in shipping containers. Over the course of the next few days, they get to know their fellow prisoners, including a former journalist, whose writing resulted in him being arrested and consequently imprisoned, fifteen years ago.

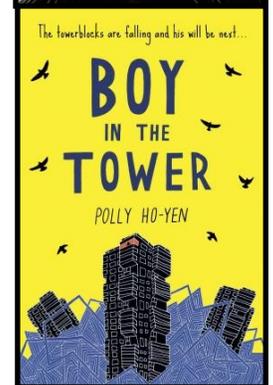
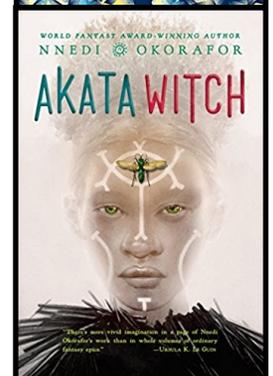
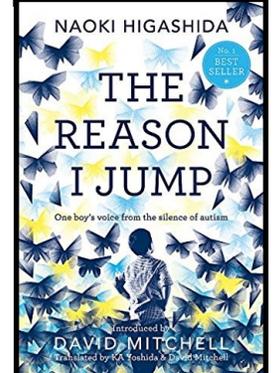
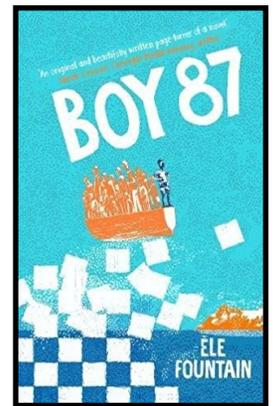
The other prisoners, all who are too weak to attempt to escape, urge the two boys to do so, begging them to let their families know of their whereabouts. The boys do escape, but the things don't go as planned.

Boy 87 is a rather tragic story, but one that is also about **hope, survival, resilience, grit and determination** in the face of truly challenging circumstances.

The Reason I Jump—Naoki Higashida (East Asia)

Written by **Naoki Higashida** when he was only 13 years old, **'The Reason I Jump'** is an illuminating read—providing one of the first insights into the mind of a young person with autism. The book takes a question and answer format—each chapter opens with a question, to which Naoki provides comprehensive answers e.g. ***"Why do you ask the same questions over and over?"***, ***"Why do you do things you shouldn't even when you've been told a million times not to?"***, ***"Why do you take ages to answer questions?"***, ***"Why don't you make eye contact when you're talking?"***, ***"Do you prefer to be on your own?"***, ***"When you're on one of your highs, what's going through your mind?"***, ***"Why do you like spinning??"*** (There are fifty-eight questions in total).

This is not just a book for teachers, parents or adults who work with autistic individuals, rather, it is a book that everyone should read, as it **debunks many of the myths about autism**. One particularly memorable answer can be found in response to the question ***"Do you prefer to be on your own?"***. **Naoki** explained that, contrary to common belief, he doesn't actually like to spend time alone: ***I can't believe that anyone born as a human being really wants to be left all on their own, not really...*** (continued overleaf...)



“No, for people with autism, what we’re anxious about is that we’re causing trouble for the rest of you, or even getting on your nerves. This is why it’s hard for us to stay around other people. This is why we often end up being left on our own. The truth is, we’d love to be with other people. But because things never, ever go right, we end up getting used to being alone, without even noticing this is happening. Whenever I overhear someone remark how much I prefer being on my own, it makes me feel desperately lonely. It’s as if they’re deliberately giving me the cold-shoulder treatment..”



“I can’t believe that anyone born as a human being really wants to be left all on their own, not really”

He also explains why he finds it difficult to do as he’s told:

“There are times when I can’t act, even though I really, badly want to. This is when my body is beyond my control. It’s as if my whole body, except for my soul, feels as if it belongs to somebody else and I have zero control over it. I don’t think you could ever imagine what an agonizing sensation this is.

You can’t always tell just by looking at people with autism , but we never really feel that our bodies are our own. They’re always acting up and going outside our control. Stuck inside them, we’re struggling so hard to make them do what we tell them.”

One of the reasons that ‘**The Reason I Jump**’ is so powerful is because it dispels many of the myths about autism. Time and time again, misconceptions, biases and false beliefs are refuted by Naoki’s answers, proving that in spite of his difficulties with communication, he is a highly empathetic , sensitive and reflective individual, with a deep understanding of why he and others with autism may behave differently to **neurotypicals**. I certainly learned a lot from this book, and it will be one that I will be, no doubt, promoting for **Empathy Day** on the **12th of June**.

ATTENTION SIXTH FORMERS!



You can now read copies of The Financial Times for free, by following this link: <https://enterprise.ft.com/en-gb/secondary-education/> and searching for ‘**Ursuline High School**’ .

Founded in **1888**, **The Financial Times** specialises in UK and international business and financial news, with intelligent analysis and commentary.

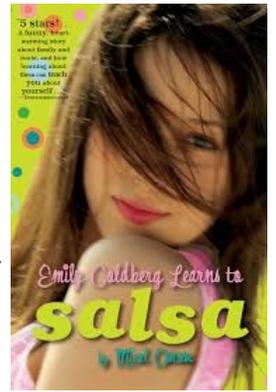
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As the **FT** itself claims : *“We believe reading the FT will help in study, essay writing, exams and broadening knowledge to improve performance in interviews for university and employment. It can also support those studying English including through audio articles..”*

NEW BOOKS

EMILY GOLDBERG LEARNS TO SALSA—MICOL OSTOW

Just like the author, the book's protagonist, Emily is **half-Jewish**, half **Puerto-Rican**. Having lived a rather privileged life in the suburbs of **New York**, she finds herself at the mercy of her mother's **Caribbean** family (who she has never met) when her maternal grandmother (who she also has never met) dies and she and her family head to **Puerto Rico** for the funeral. Having originally made plans to travel across the **US** with her two best friends and spend the rest of her summer with her boyfriend, she instead finds herself facing a summer of **chores, cooking, curfews, church, and rules**.



Initially, Emily can't stand the thought of having to stay in **Puerto Rico**, in a place where she feels women and girls are repressed . What's worse is that one of her cousins, Lucy, has taken an instant disliking to her, which makes her feel even more out of place.

However, as time passes, and her mother starts to show signs of improvement, gradually returning to her old self, Emily starts to come round to the idea that spending her summer in a Caribbean country isn't all that bad after all, and more importantly, she gets the opportunity to discover and connect with an important part of her heritage—one that until then, she had never known before.

With so many students at the Ursuline coming from **non-British backgrounds**, being of **mixed heritage**, or **mixed race**, 'Emily Goldberg Learns to Salsa' is a book that should appeal to many of our students. It is certainly a book that is bound to inspire you to learn more about your roots.

STUDENT REVIEW

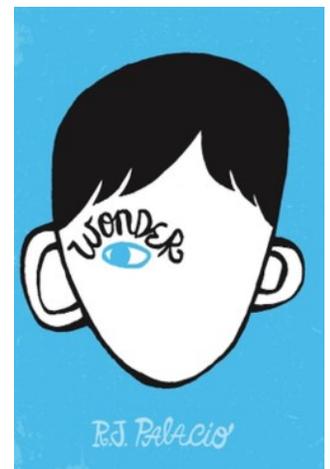
WONDER. Review by Alisha, Year 8

This is a powerful novel about a boy who is different from the rest of us - he has a facial deformity. His name is August and this is his life story. It's a roller coaster of emotions, as we feel his sadness and - eventually - his happiness in school, with his new-found friends.

R.J.Palacio wrote the story, and she manages to get inside the head of a special child, who suffers bullying and ridicule. Throughout the book, August receives notes from classmates telling him how ugly he is.

The school photographer is asked to cut him out of the class picture. These acts of cruelty are balanced by moments of kindness from other classmates and family members, including his parents and his sister Via.

(continues overleaf)



What gives the novel its momentum is that it's told from different characters' perspectives. We learn just as much about the important people in August's life, as we do about him. Via, for instance, becomes a lot happier when she has a boyfriend, who she meets while they're rehearsing a play. Up to that point, she'd always felt in her brother's shadow, because he'd received so much care and attention from their mum and dad.

The story is set in present-day America, although no towns or cities are mentioned. This gives the reader the idea that it could be happening anywhere to anyone. This universal feeling gives the book its appeal. Also, the people in the story feel believable, with all their good qualities and their faults. August (or Auggie, as his family calls him) comes to terms with his unusual appearance, but still wishes he wasn't so different from everyone else. Here's what he says early on: "If I found a magic lamp and I could have one wish, I would wish that I had a normal face that no one ever noticed at all."

I felt that this story was real, because I could feel August's struggle. His whole life was a battle and that came across very well. The doctors thought he would die as a baby, but he has such strength that he survives a number of operations. The dark sadness of the opening chapters gives way to some shafts of light, as August makes friends who accept him for who he is. The 2017 film of the book - which I saw recently - did a good job of portraying August's life, and kept the book's heartwarming qualities. I recommend both - but read the book first.

BOOK CLUB

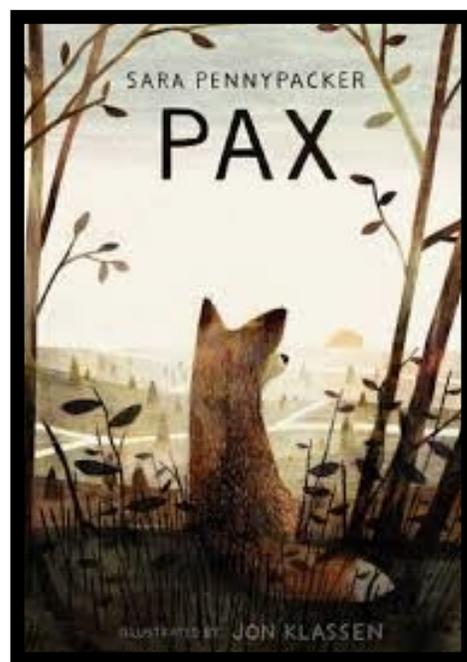
A few weeks ago, we started a new book— Sara Pennypacker's '**Pax**', another book that was sent to us from the charity **Booktrust**. What makes '**Pax**' unique is the fact that half of the story is told from the perspective of a fox—**Pax**, while the other half is told through the eyes of a young boy—**Peter**. The chapters alternate between **Pax's** narrative and that of **Peter's**.

'Pax' was the first book to be chosen by our **Book Club** attendees (democratically, it must be said!).

Initially not all members were enthusiastic about the prospect of reading a book about a fox. Yet, despite the story getting off to a slow start, '**Pax**' is turning out to be a rather good read.

It just goes to show that we should never judge a book by its cover!

If you are interested in attending a club, which allows you to read several books a year—with a great deal of reading aloud and plenty of discussion, then come along to **Reading Club**, on **Monday**, after school from **3.15—4pm** in the **LRC (silent reading corner)**.



WHAT'S COMING UP NEXT HALF TERM?

Visit from an alumni

After the Half Term break, we will be welcoming a very special guest—a former Ursuline student, who attended the school during **World War Two**. She will talk to our students about what it was like to be an Ursuline girl in the **1940s**, at a time when student life was very different: in the 1940s, against the backdrop of the **Second World War**, the **Ursuline** provided students with the opportunity to board, there were far fewer pupils in each year group than there are now, lessons were taught by nuns, and the school was used as a bomb shelter.

After having told us some stories from her student days, Sheila will then speak about her fascinating career in the **Foreign Office**, including her time working alongside the first female Prime Minister of the United Kingdom—**Margaret Thatcher**.

The talk should be suitable for students from all year groups but of particular interest to those who are perhaps considering a career in the Civil Service.

Refugee Week

To mark Refugee Week, (**June 17—23 June**), with the help of our **junior librarian team** and **sixth form students**, we will be running a few activities in the LRC, in line with the theme of **You, me and those who came before**, as well as promoting young adult books about or based on true stories of refugees. Students will also be able to find displays and book lists.

Intervention/study support club

We will be holding an intervention club for **KS3** students where they can get extra help and support with homework.

This will be run by **Year 12** students and will be held in the **Careers Section** of the LRC, every **Monday** lunch time.



Sheila Waghorn, pictured on the far right

