

English Newsletter Term 1 2015

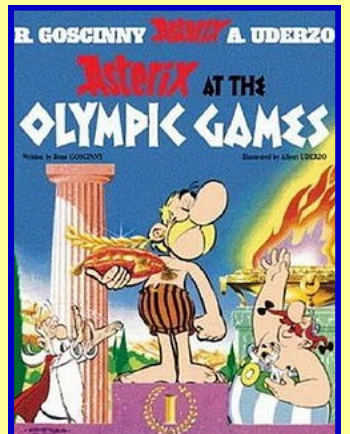
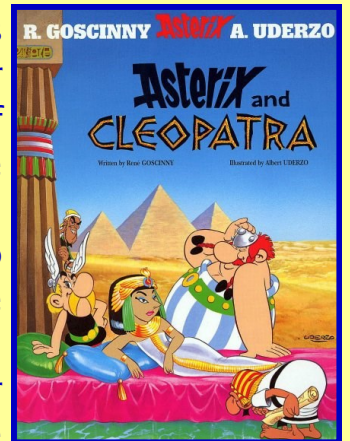
A few words from Paula

In this newsletter, we have a focus on boys' and their reading. Years 9 and 10 in particular, are typically when boys' interest in reading may diminish. Sadly, we all as teachers encounter boys in Year 9 and 10 who do not enjoy reading, and in some cases, have never actually read a book. With the technological age we live in, our students are faced with so many distractions and other choices, which results in limited time being dedicated to reading. With games, devices, social media etc, students often tell me that they don't have 'time' to read. I am firmly of the belief that it is important to **make** time for reading, as our children would with anything else of importance in their lives.

Reading enhances vocabulary, spelling, knowledge, fluency and creativity. Through reading, students can travel the world, meet people, see places and experience adventures. How then do we encourage our reluctant readers (particularly boys) to read? I have daughters, so when it comes to boys' reading, my personal frame of reference is the men in my life, namely my husband, my father and my brother.



My brother, Russell, grew up on Asterix books. As a young teenager, I didn't understand the appeal, until in an attempt to impress him, I began reading them. I started with [Asterix and Cleopatra](#), my thinking being there was a queen in it—so it must be good! Once I realised that there was so much more to these 'comics' than what met the eye, I was hooked. What fascinated my brother and I was the ingenious use of names for the characters: "Getafix" for the village Druid, whose task is to 'fix' his villagers as well as supply the magic potion; "Cacaphonix" the Bard, whose loud and wailing music links to the idea of a cacophony of noise; and of course linking to the idea of phonics and sounds. My personal favourite however, "Unhygenix" the Fishmonger, well known in the village for selling his rotten and somewhat unhygienic fish! It is these clever subtleties, which once understood, are such a focus area for boys. If your son is a reluctant reader, give these a try. They are not too long, they have great images to accompany the text and are engaging. I still read Asterix books when I get a chance, and encourage my students to do the same. My brother, always passionate about history, spent so much of his teenage years reading and researching history, and now as an adult and lawyer, he is still enjoying non-fiction reads. He still reads [Asterix](#) books and has looked after his much loved collections for over 40 years.



My dad, has always read non-fiction, including the biography- **Tuesdays with Morrie**, which he read here in New Zealand. He found it in a holiday a bach where we were staying. He loved it. My dad still reads non-fiction, and I am proud to say also wrote Maths books in South Africa.

My husband, Ray, is the opposite. He loves novels and has always been a keen reader. He, like me, loves a good crime thriller. We are both fans of Harlan Coben and Lee Child, as well as many others. When I asked Ray what sparked his love of reading, it was the book; **It Shouldn't Happen to a Vet**, by James Herriot.



He still speaks passionately about this book and the stories in it. It is clear that this book sparked not only a love of reading, but a love of animals.

What have I learnt about reading from these men in my life? Well, I have learnt that there is something out there for



everyone, you just have to find it. It just takes that one author, one genre, the right graphic novel, the right circumstances, the right mood, to spark that love of reading. Try different genre and authors, and if they don't do it for you, try something else. Please don't forget the importance of reading with your children, in front of your children and to your children. The potential impact is immeasurable.

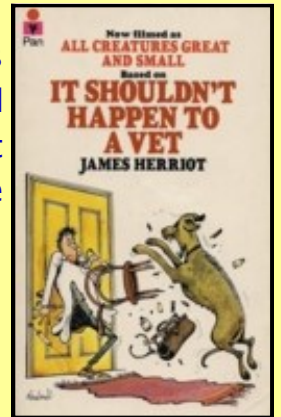
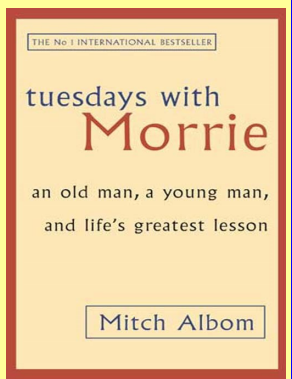
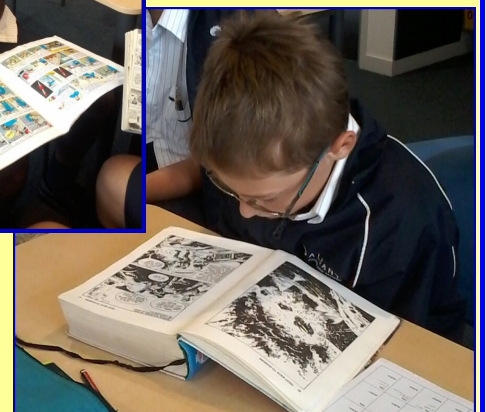
Throughout this newsletter, we have contributions from a number of our male staff and Stephen Williams (BOT). They have agreed to share their favourite books, authors, characters and pieces of advice to help hook your son into reading. I would like to thank them all for taking the time to be a part of such an important initiative. Please share this newsletter with your child, and perhaps you will find that perfect book or author.

"A book is a dream that you hold in your hand."

Neil Gaiman

Happy reading

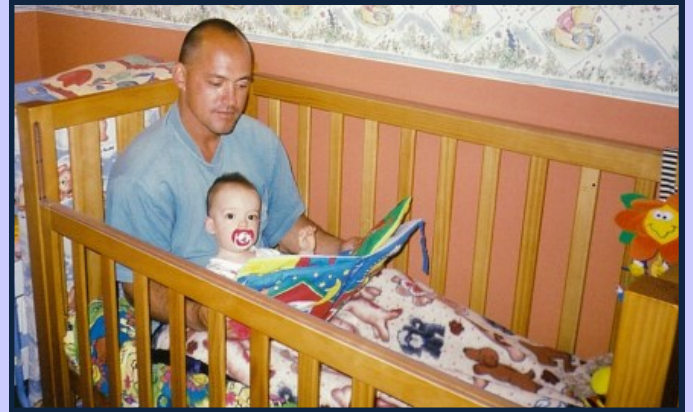
Paula



Living The Dream Through Reading

When And Why I Started Reading

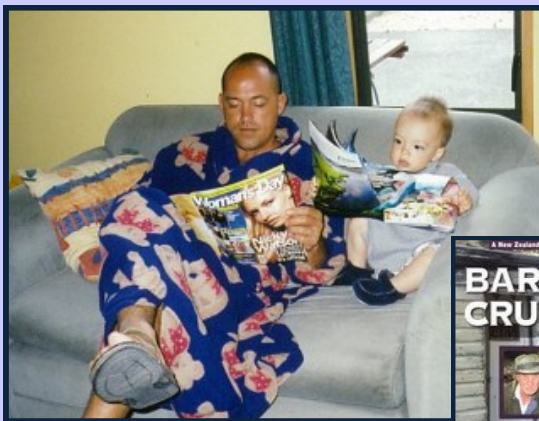
When I was at school I struggled to read. I would watch the other kids in my class at reading time pick up their books and appear to get lost in them, then the teacher would ask one or two to give a verbal book report. This part I would love, that's what would give me the things to dream about-listening to the other kids read gave me what I needed. The truth of my reading problem was I just could not read. I was very good at hiding this until I was caught out in Form One - about where you are now - and from then on I started to learn to read, thanks to the first teacher who really cared.



How Reading Can Change Your Life

It was very slow and sometimes very embarrassing but you need to hold your head up and always be proud of yourself. In life you will always have those who will laugh and make fun of others, those types of people will always be there and usually they are hiding their own insecurities. Stick with it - when it happens you will never forget it. For me it was Form Two-(year 8)-and the book was called THE BIG FLOOD and it was 32 pages long. I was 13 years old. From that day on I have had lots of misses and only a few hits - I think my problem was that I tried to read books too far from my ability, so watch out for that and remember SMALL STEPS and you will always reach the top of the mountain. Treat life like this and you will always succeed. The more you read the more confident you will become and with confidence life's doors will open up for you.

Think of reading as a tree. Sometimes when climbing you get to the end of a branch and can't go any further, so you return back to the centre and start again. Books are the same, some start well and fade. Just go back and try again.



When You Get Hooked, Reading Will Change your life

BARRY CRUMP is the name of the author. The first book of his I read was ARTY AND THE FOX. It's about two mates and what they get up to trying to make money. This book will have you smiling and then laughing before you get to the end of the first chapter.



quite hold me. In between other books I return

I have read all of his books, over 25 of them and only found two which didn't back to Barry Crump's because they make me laugh so much. So have a go!

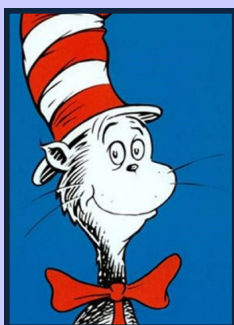
JEFFREY ARCHER is my favorite author of them all. The way he writes and tells a story keeps me hooked from start to finish. I have read all of his books and have just been given his latest book, and it's the best yet.

Places I Read

On my boat while waiting for that BIG fish, on my lilo in the pool, in my digger while waiting for the next truck, this one is neat because I am being paid to read! Other places are at home, in the car, at the bar, on the lawn in a storm this one isn't the norm.

Did you see what I just did? That is one of the great things about reading - it can teach you to rhyme. Try CAT IN THE HAT and see what you think of that.

What Makes Reading Awesome



It gives you the ability to make choices, and life is all about choices. Take it from me, reach for the moon, if you don't make it you will still end up in the stars.

I hope I have inspired you to pick up a book make a start today.

Your new book worm friend.

PS: If you see me at school come and say hi and ask me questions about reading

PPS: (STILL LIVING THE DREAM).

Stephen Williams (BOT AJHS)

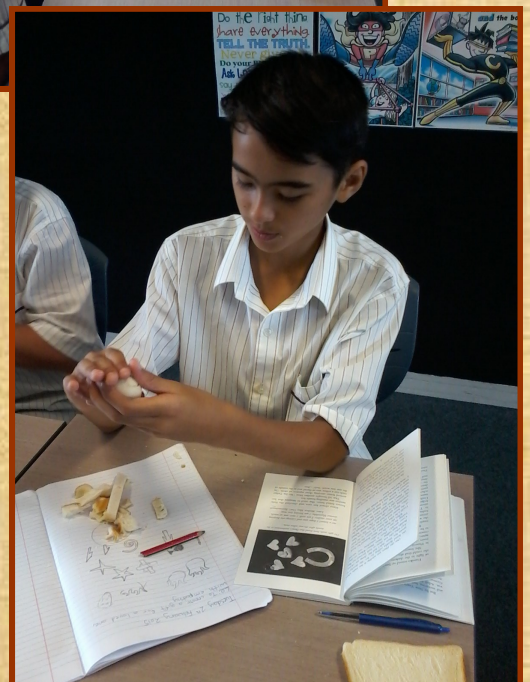
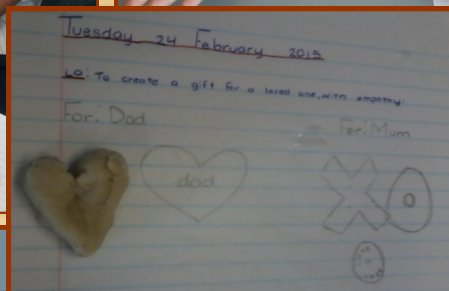
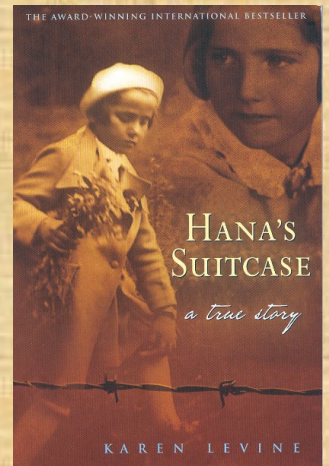
Holocaust Survivors Vist AJHS

Once again, our staff and students were truly privileged to welcome Bob and Freda Narev to our school. Bob and Freda shared with our students their experiences as survivors of the Holocaust, an utterly moving and inspirational event. It was overwhelming to listen to their stories delivered with such dignity and grace. A wonderful opportunity for our Year 9 students to learn first hand, what they had read about from the literature we have been studying. For many of our students, the study of Hana's Suitcase was their first introduction to the events of WWII and the atrocities committed against millions of people during this period. Thank you, Bob and Freda, for making our students' learning experience so valuable and meaningful. You are an inspiration!



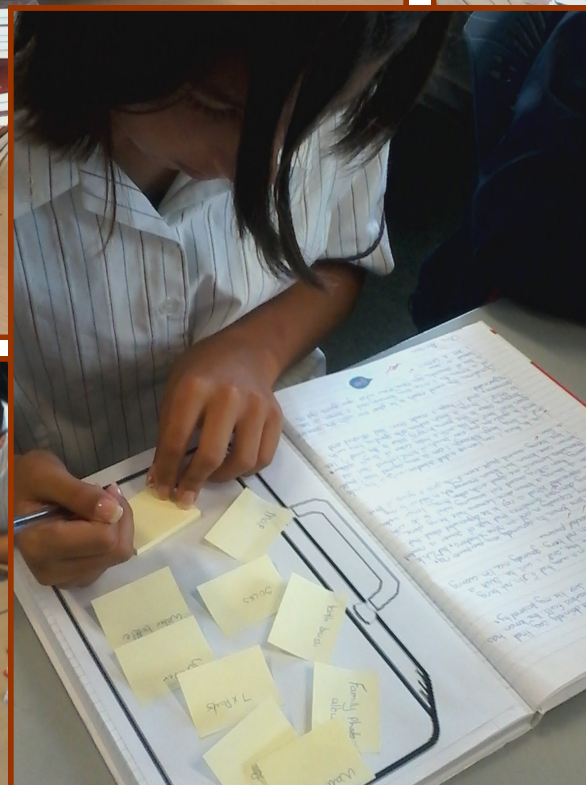
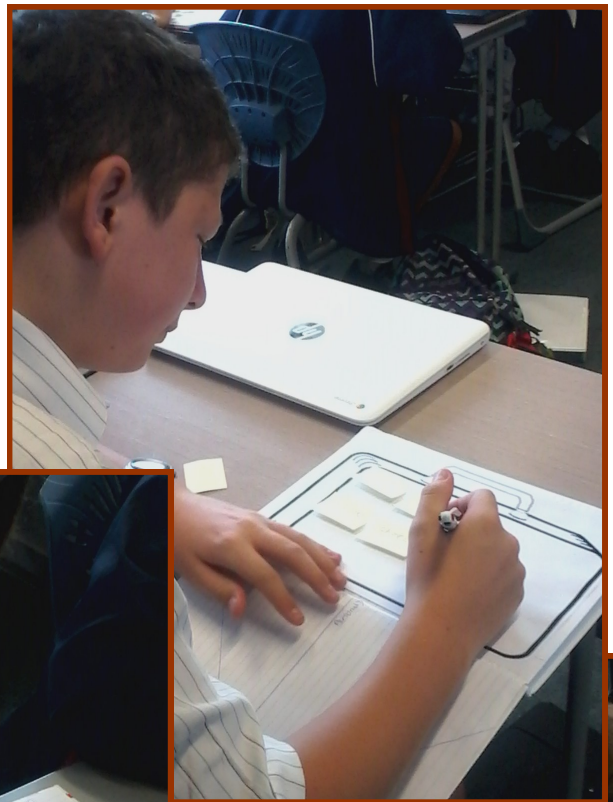
Hana's Suitcase

Our Year 9 students have been reading the non fiction text, "Hana's Suitcase", by Karen Levine. This is the true story of a young Jewish girl named Hana Brady, and her experiences during WWII. Hana and her family faced many challenges, and one of the most touching moments is when Hana's mother makes a gift for her daughter's birthday. While imprisoned in Ravensbruck, Marketa sacrifices her food and makes Hana some charms for her bracelet from bread. Our students' task was to make a charm for a loved one. They were given bread, water and a little tooth paste for decoration. This task was a challenging one, and helped our students get a better understanding of how Marketa put Hana's needs before her own.



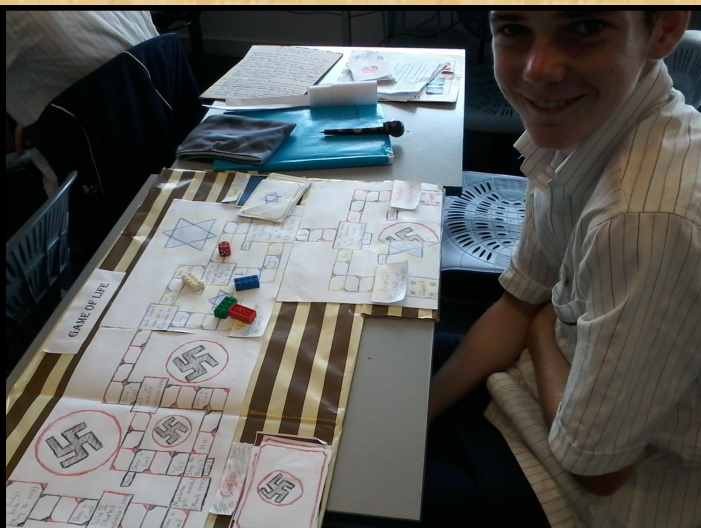
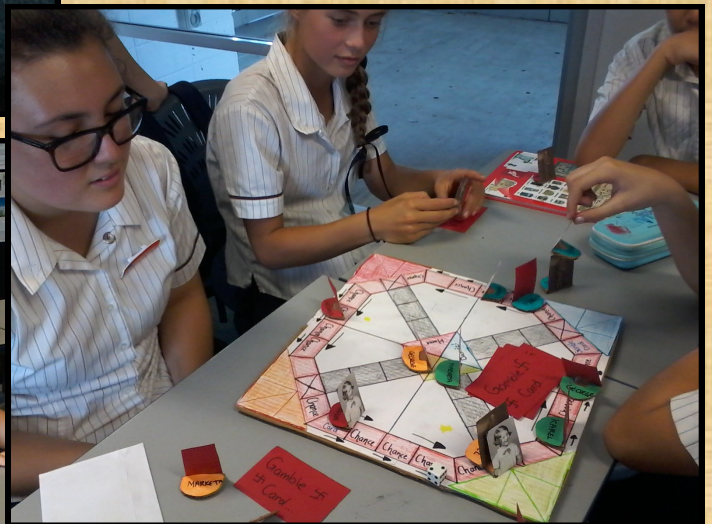
Hana's Suitcase

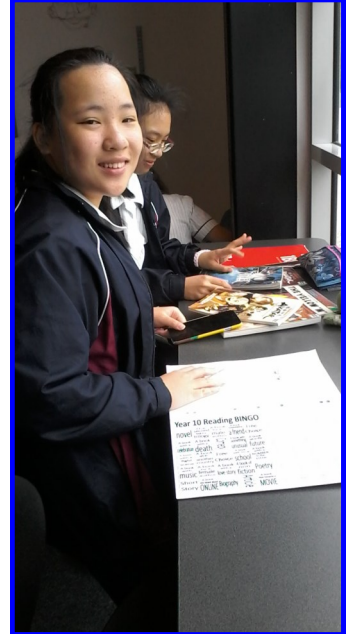
Year 9 students were asked to consider what they would pack if they were given only a few moments to make a choice. Many made choices such as photos, iphones, ipads, clothes, first aid kits, money, maps, books and food. They were horrified to discover that along their journey many of their possessions would be taken away from them, especially those with a monetary value. The majority of students were left with very little and in some cases ... nothing.



Hana's Suitcase

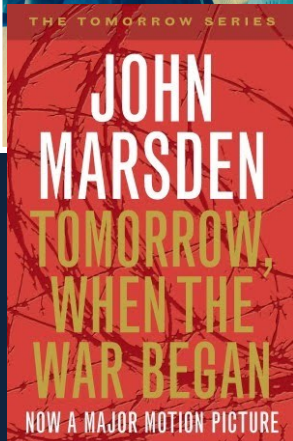
As part of tracking Hana's journey, students in Mrs McCormack's classes have been making creative board games to represent the challenges and obstacles Hana and her family faced. A creative and inventive way to learn about such an important topic.





Mr Callon says....

"Books are ALWAYS better than the movie...."



At school none of my friends ever read. It wasn't that we avoided reading, it just never even crossed our minds. There were so many other things that we had going on. Until one day my teacher gave me Tomorrow When The War Began to read. I reluctantly started reading it and found I couldn't put it down. Since that moment I have ensured I find time for myself to read. The majority of the time these books are about sports. From a novel about a fighting football fan to a story about a struggling baseballer trying to make it in the big leagues. A few of these books have been made into movies and the saying is true, books are always better than the movie. Give reading a chance and you will find out why.

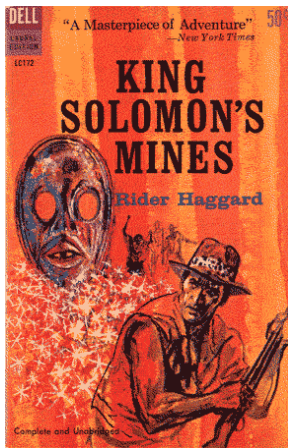
More from our male staff...

Mr Coleman

says..... Favourite books are anything from adventure and fantasy to crime novels. Favourite authors include Louis de Bernieres, Clive Cussler, Matthew Reilly and Michael Connelly. I like to read because for me it is a form of travel; a way to travel to a different and exciting place or even a different time like the past or the future. I think reading is awesome because it makes me feel relaxed after a busy day, it is a great way to escape to a whole new world found between the pages of a book.

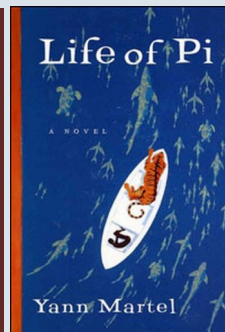
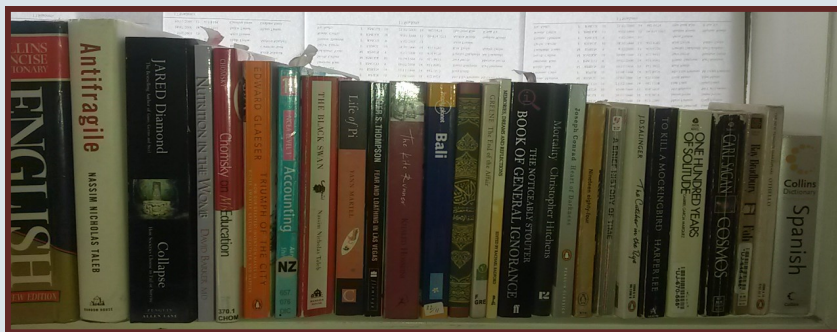


That is me in a giraffe onesie reading a book.



One of my favourite books is King Solomon's Mines by Sir Henry Rider Haggard; it is the ultimate adventure set in a world I will probably never get the chance to visit myself. It is the perfect combination of drama, action and suspense. I am sure the inspiration for Indiana Jones came from this book.

For me reading is so much more enjoyable than watching TV because it requires you to use your imagination and picture the scenes in the book.



Mr Scott's Favourite Books

Books that blew my mind:

A Universe from Nothing - Lawrence Krause

The Black Swan - Nicholas Taleb

The Magus - John Fowles

Free Will - Sam Harris

Books I read as a teen:

Amazon Adventure - Willard Price

Halfmen of O - Maurice Gee

Books with a super twist:

The French Lieutenant's Woman - John Fowles

Invisible Monsters - Chuck Palahniuk

Books that made me LOL:

Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas - Hunter S Thompson

Trainspotting - Irvine Welsh

Books I wished didn't end:

Life of Pi - Yann Martel

The Source - James A Michener

Books I couldn't finish:

Catch 22 - Joseph Heller

Othello - William Shakespeare

Books I want to read:

The Qu'ran - (cultural fiction)

Heart of Darkness - Joseph Conrad

Roald Dahl, tales with a twist!

A few of the Year 10 English classes have been studying the timeless tales from Roald Dahl, The Landlady and Lamb to the Slaughter. Two short stories with twists and turns that take the reader on exciting journeys, including themes of betrayal, deception and murder. These classic stories set decades ago in time before the internet, cell phones, smart phones and computers, still enthrall teenagers today.

Students are also learning how to effectively use the PEEL structure with their writing, and in 10M1, students have been using this structure to write responses and paragraphs about character, setting and themes from the stories. This is a sophisticated skill, which does take quite some time to perfect, but they are doing so well!

Point Example Explanation Link

(Introduces the main idea - use key words)

(Evidence/quotes to support the main idea)

(Elaborate on the idea)

(Makes connections to self/current event/another text)

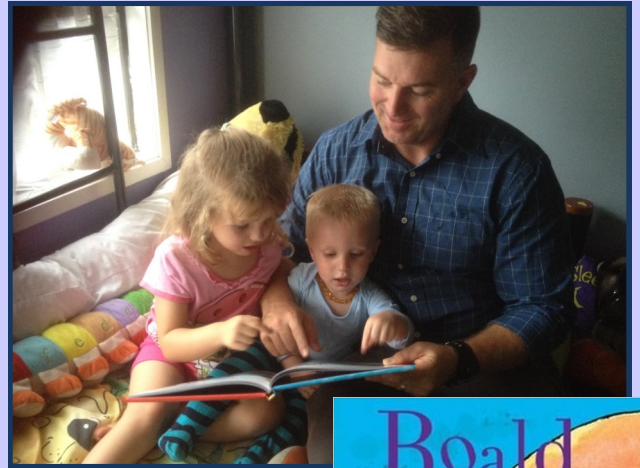
The Landlady's house is a warm and inviting setting, which makes it important to the success of her murderous intent. With plush couches and beds that are made and turned down, she has staged the house in a way that makes her victims feel at home. "Come over here now and warm yourself by this lovely fire" is a perfect example of the landlady's cunning ways of making her victims feel welcome and at ease. Her ways of capturing victims are not unlike the witch in Hansel and Gretel. When they see the cottage it feels like they are meant to be there and is a vast improvement from the cold forest they are used to. The witch targets children and therefore she uses tasty treats to lure them in. The landlady targets young men, so therefore uses the comforts of home to entrap them, therefore making her cosy house an important setting.

Caitlin

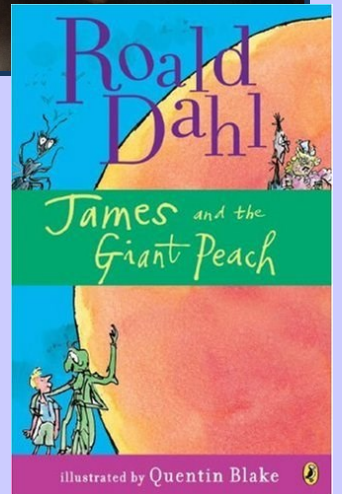


Mr Shaver

When I look back over the years I can honestly say one of the things I look back and say are how I wish that I had read more books. I remember the first large book I read Journey to the Centre of the Earth and I remember the last book I read, The Lost Symbol by Dan Brown. I even remember the first book that I could not put down The Death and Life of Superman. The thing was when I was young I didn't think that I enjoyed reading. I would rather play sports or go out with friends. That was because I had didn't know how many different books I could read.



It wasn't until I was about 13 that I started learning about how I could choose my own books. I enjoyed basketball and I remember reading a biography about a professional basketball player. It seemed to start answering all the things I always wanted to know about professional basketball. As my interests started to grow so did my book collection. I remember loving nearly every Roald Dahl book, especially James and the Giant Peach.



Now if I pick up a book it's probably fiction that is based on facts. Stonehenge by Bernard Cornwell would be one of my favourite books as it has everything set out imaginatively about the history of Stonehenge and how it was built. I believe one good book is all it will take to get you hooked into reading. Even if it is funny poetry,



like Shel Silverstein or Dr. Seuss once you get the reading bug it is hard to stop. I find it especially good to read at night before bed. It's a time when you just escape the world around you and go to someplace else.

Mr Laurenson

Favourite books and authors:

Non fiction-anything about politics, history, education, technology. Big time podcaster as well.

All time favourite reads:

Loved The Lord of the Ring series

Advice to boys who think that reading is not for them:

The most intelligent people I know are avid readers. "Knowledge is Power"

When and where I read:

At home (before bed) and on holiday

Favourite genre:

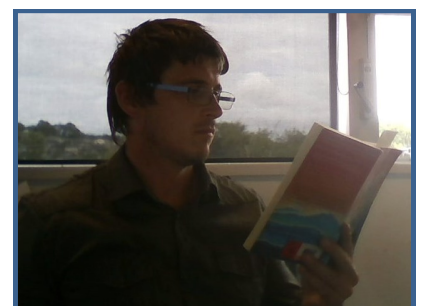
Non-fiction

What hooked me into reading?

Being able to apply new knowledge to different situations.

What makes reading awesome?

Learning new things.



Library News - Term 1 2015

Why boys are likely to be poorer readers than girls

I have been reading *The ABC of Gender Equality in Education*, recently published by the OECD (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development).

The foreword to the report states:

'gender disparities in performance do not stem from innate differences in aptitude, but rather from students' attitudes towards learning and their behaviour in school, from how they choose to spend their leisure time, and from the confidence they have - or do not have - in their own abilities as students.'

Some of the reasons given in the report for why boys may be lower achievers than girls include boys' attitude to homework and school, that they are more likely to spend more time on computers and the internet, and that they are less likely to read outside school for pleasure.

Reading for pleasure

At AJHS we are intent on building a collection that encourages all boys to be reading for pleasure. We have specifically targeted those reluctant readers amongst us by purchasing series along the lines of the Wimpy Kid; humorous, relatively quick to read and often incorporating drawings or comic strips. Of this collection, nearly 90% are presently out on issue. Students who need help to reserve or request a book, should come to the library desk for assistance.



Sandra Ware - Library Manager



A fun display ...

That tantalising feeling, just on the tip of your tongue - 'it was about some kids' - 'my friend was reading it' - 'I read it last year' - 'they had it at my last school' - 'I don't know the author's name' ...

"I can't remember the title, but the cover was red!"

Cats

Yes. That's right. Cats. Too many of them. My mum told me that she got a call from our neighbour saying she was going to France for two weeks and needed someone to take care of her pets while she was away. Sooo...I had to do it. But I didn't really mind at first, since, well, cats are easy to take care of, but I never knew that our neighbour had THAT many cats!

I was sitting in her house with the small felines EVERYWHERE around the place; the lounge, bedrooms, the kitchen. UGH! I could go on about this topic. Anyway, I'm glad the cats aren't throwing any hissy fits, they're well tamed. My eyes scanned around the living room and spotted my favourite cat, Opal. She's a two year old Siamese and has unbelievably beautiful blue eyes. She hopped on my lap with the other cats and immediately started purring. Maybe baby-sitting the cats wasn't so bad after all.



Moana

The best place I went to was New York City. I visited the Empire State Building. Did you know that when it was built in 1930 it was the world's tallest building?



I also enjoyed going to Central Park, and it is the quietest place in New York that is outdoors.

William

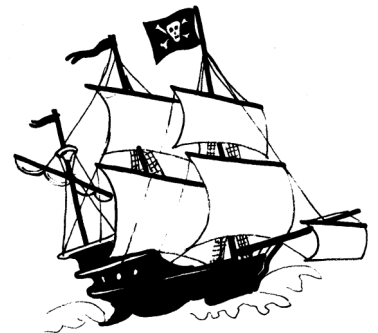
PUFF, PUFF, PUFF!

I ran as fast as I could, running away from those pirates. I was tired, cold, hungry.

I squatted down and hid in the bush.

"Did they see me?" I questioned myself. I stood up and looked around. Everywhere I went, I always saw them.

Curse this island. Why did I come here in the first place?



Taynian



Mr Booyesen



As a child I absolutely hated reading. I used to ask my Mum to read my books, then tell me the story so I could go and write tests or exams on that book. She must have been a good reader as I always passed, just. I enjoy fiction and non-fiction, although of late I have been reading mostly non-fiction. I also find 'historical fiction' very interesting. One day I picked up a book and read the first page because

I had nothing better to do. The first page was very interesting and I wondered what would be happening on the second page. Same story with the second page, which lead me to page three. Before I knew what happened, I was hooked. And boys, this is the thing - you make up pictures in your mind of the characters, settings etc; the way you want them to look, not some TV programme or movie doing it for you. Also, the characters and settings almost become part of your life, you live yourself into that book as if you are there. My favourite authors are Wilbur Smith, Bryce Courtenay and Tony Park. If you want to read some amazing books, read books about African Safaris. I read every night when I go to bed. A night's sleep just wouldn't be the same if I haven't done any reading. It is relaxing and just makes me forget about 'life' for the time

that I do. My message to you is, get into reading. It's one of the most rewarding things you can do.

Mr Swanepoel

Favourite books and authors:

Bryce Courtenay

All time favourite reads:

I love to read biographies.

Advice to boys who think that reading is not for them:

Hang in there. Keep on trying till you find something that interests you. You are fortunate that we live in an age where reading opportunities are all around us. Do not think that reading a novel is the only way of reading. There are many ways to read and get reading mileage.

When and where you may read:

I cannot go to bed without reading for at least 30 minutes. The best thing in the morning is to wake up with a cup of coffee and spend about

30 minutes reading the latest news.



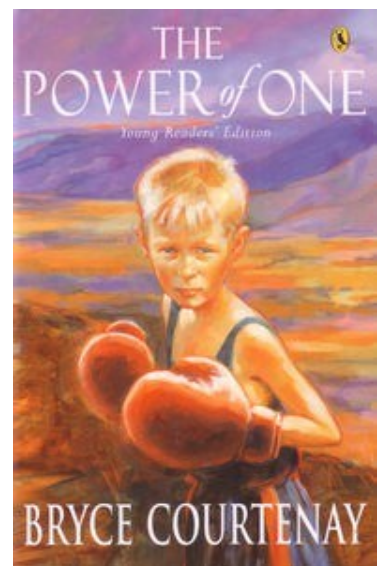
Favourite genre:

Must be crime or drama

I also love anything related to WW2.

Suggested reads:

Boys cannot move on to other stories without reading a few books by Roald Dahl and Andy Griffiths



What hooked you into reading?

I am very curious by nature. Just want to find out as much as possible.

From a very young age I have read any newspaper or magazine I could find

What makes reading awesome?

Having a chocolate or a cup of coffee with a book. My favourite place to read is in a cosy cafe with the smell of coffee.