

1. **Fangirl** ●●● - Rainbow Rowell

A contemporary young adult novel about a fresher starting at university and adjusting to student life alongside experiencing, and overcoming, social anxiety. The reader witnesses protagonist Cath learning to find an equilibrium between her daily reality and her necessary escape. Get lost not only in Cath's day-to-day occurrences, but also in the fantasy world of the fictional heroes she herself writes about.

2. **Siddhartha** ●● - Hermann Hesse

Exploring the topics of self-discovery, happiness and self-achievement, this book is full of wisdom and inspirational messages for young adults to live their life in the most fulfilling of ways. Through the main character's unconventional and unique decisions in how to deal with life's challenges, both philosophical and spiritual questions are raised, leading the reader to reconsider how they view the world around them.

3. **Bluets** ● - Maggie Nelson

In this beautiful work of experimental poetry, Maggie Nelson combines prose and lyricism to create a collection of short and unconventional poems, exploring the imagery and emotions linked to the colour blue. The subjects of loss, loneliness and love are expressed through relatable and easy to grasp messages, which when linked together inspire both reflection and meditation alongside a calm and contented psyche.

4. **Am I Normal Yet?** ●●● - Holly Bourne

A brutal but brilliant takedown of how we talk about mental illness, feminism, and friendship. If you've ever felt out of the ordinary, this is for you (i.e. everyone). It manages to be enjoyable without being flippant, incisive without being preachy. My first thought having finished it was 'I wish I'd read this when I was a teenager', but in all truth I think it's just as valuable to have read it now.

5. **The Humans** ●● - Matt Haig

Haig has previously written on his past experiences of anxiety and depression and explores this through the plot of an alien occupying the body of a human professor who attempts to fit into society through learning what it really means to be human. It features elements of humour, an exploration of love, whilst also making a statement on the flawed yet wondrous nature of human beings.

6. **Night Circus** ● - Erin Morgenstern

In this magical epic two children are raised for a mysterious game against each other through the world of the circus. This masterwork of literature contains magic, romance, adventure, as well as vivid descriptions of this surreal and dreamlike world. While it covers dark themes and approaches serious topics such as the workings of an anxious mind, it nonetheless does so in a way which only adds beauty and richness to the story.

7. **The Strangest Secret** ● - Earl Nightingale

Nightingale proposes that if an individual believes in their own success they can achieve whatever they desire. Meanwhile, if someone adopts a negative mindset and doubts their own abilities, they automatically fall at the first hurdle. It highlights the importance of positive mentality, and as it's a short story can comfortably be enjoyed in one sitting.

8. **The Catcher in the Rye** ●● - J. D. Salinger

This classic coming of age story follows Holden Caulfield through his struggles to deal with the complex world of adulthood. Touching on subjects of loneliness, loss, growing up, and learning to accept others, this is a must read for any student, as they may find beauty in Holden's masterful use of sarcasm and irony. Despite dealing with complicated motifs such as identity it employs an accessible, conversational style that boosts the mood whilst exploring these issues.

9. **A Court of Thorns and Roses** ●● - Sarah J Maas

This fantasy trilogy invites readers into the vivid world of fairy tales, from classic tales like Beauty and the Beast, to Greek myths such as Persephone's abduction to the underworld. Not only great in its world building and potential for escapism, these novels also explore themes of depression and PTSD through the adventures of the curious and rebellious Feyre Archeron.

10. **The Wisdom of Insecurity: A Message for An Age of Anxiety** - Alan Watts ●

"The desire for security and the fear of insecurity are the same thing". The words of philosopher-come-poet Alan Watts seem more pertinent today than ever, as we all obsess over trying to plan and secure our future lives, and in doing so crucially overlook the most important of our lives: the one we are living right now. This book shall open your eyes to the absurdity of worrying daily, whilst offering lifelong comfort and reassurance. A book not just to be read, but to be inhaled daily.

11. **Anxiety for Beginners** ● ● - Eleanor Morgan

A third of Britons will suffer from anxiety at some point in their lives; and a large proportion of those are young adults. Eleanor Morgan offers a first-person account of her struggles with anxiety. She draws on her own experiences, whilst using humor and wit, she explores her own triggers, and suggests how those struggling with anxiety issues can live enjoyable lives by learning to accept anxiety - rather than being ashamed by it.

12. **How To Ruin Everything** ● ● ● - George Watsky

Having been praised by the writers John Green, Lin-Manuel Miranda and many more, this book is a collection of essays about Watsky's personal life. It explores the inevitable pitfalls and triumphs of daily life in a light-hearted and humorous way. He discloses how he has come to accept defeat as necessary to personal progress and self awareness; with such acceptance a great weight may be taken off your shoulders.



5 Proven Health Benefits of Reading...

- ✓ Book readers are more likely to live longer.
- ✓ Helps you maintain cognitive status: keeps your brain sharp.
- ✓ Promotes empathy, social perception, and emotional intelligence.
- ✓ Enhances vocabulary, concentration, and critical thinking skills.
- ✓ Reduction in depression.

[References]

Bavishi A, Slade M, Levy B. A chapter a day: Association of book reading with longevity. *Social Science & Medicine*. 2016;164:44-48.

Dowrick C, Billington J, Robinson J, Hamer A, Williams C. Get into Reading as an intervention for common mental health problems: exploring catalysts for change: Figure 1. *Medical Humanities*. 2012;38(1):15-20.

Endorsed by:

THE
READING
AGENCY

READING
WELL



For extra support

please go to:
<http://www.exeter.ac.uk/wellbeing/>

#TheFreshList

12
Mood-boosting books
to help you get through your year...



- Transitional books
- Mood-boosting books
- Mental-health books

Every fresher's most important reading list.