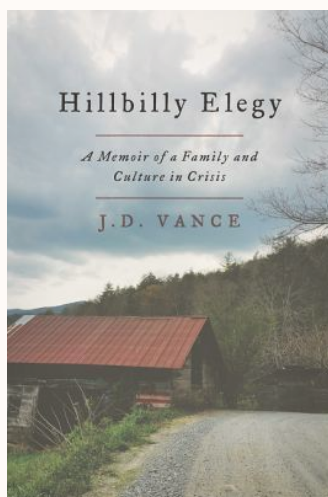


Non-fiction
by



Many readers prefer reading NONFICTION – or what teachers and librarians sometimes refer to as ‘information’ books. It’s a huge and diverse classification, which also covers biography and memoir. This list, featuring a selection of titles from our upcoming BOOK app, gives a good sense of why nonfiction can be just as compelling to read as the best fiction.



Hillbilly Elegy

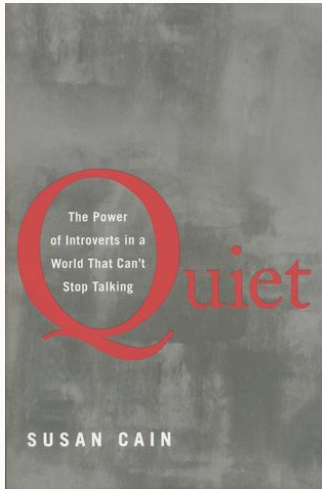
by J.D. Vance

In this insightful memoir, J.D. Vance examines the culture he was born into – defined as poor white working-class ‘hillbilly’. Although Vance made it through Yale Law School, and became a professional and personal success, he is acutely aware that he is one of the rare lucky ones. Using his own family history as an example, Vance explores the reasons why so many people feel they are shut out of the American Dream.

Reading and interest level: 14+

Genre: memoir; biography; culture; family; friendship; military; USA

This book contains strong language, violence, drugs/alcohol and some emotionally disturbing material.

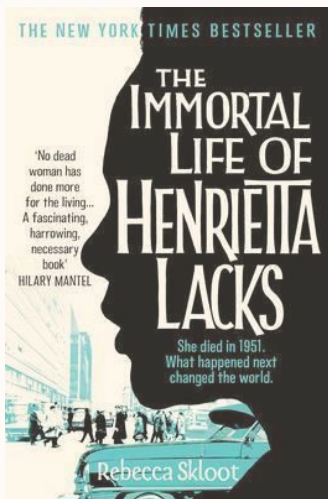


Quiet by Susan Cain

In this ground-breaking and influential book, former lawyer Susan Cain defines what it means to be introverted – and how that is not necessarily a bad thing. In fact, Cain's thesis is that introverts have a lot to offer, and indeed, that the qualities and skills associated with introverted personalities are badly needed in a world which tends to overvalue extroversion. This book will give the reader great insight into how our natural temperaments influence everything from learning styles to relationships to career choices.

Reading and interest level: 16+

Genre: nonfiction; psychology; self-help; business; education; culture



The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks by Rebecca Skloot

At the age of 31, Henrietta Lacks – a poor black woman who worked as a tobacco sharecropper – died of cervical cancer. Lacks was buried in an unmarked grave, but she left behind five children – and the HeLa cells which have transformed medical research in the 20th and 21st century. This book reads like a detective story, and it is a fascinating historical exposé of race, class, poverty and medical ethics in America.

Reading and interest level: 16+

Genre: nonfiction; medicine; biology; culture; history; race; family; ethics

This book features some strong language, sexuality and some emotionally disturbing material.

REASONS TO STAY ALIVE

Matt Haig

'Matt Haig is astounding' STEPHEN FRY

Reasons To Stay Alive

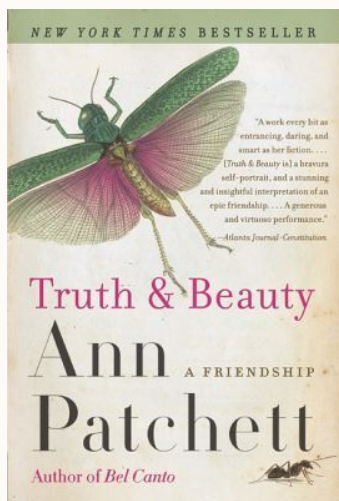
by Matt Haig

Author Matt Haig has been a lifelong sufferer of anxiety and depression; at 24, he seriously considered suicide. Drawing on the author's own life, this memoir addresses the subject of mental health with great honesty and humour. Whether you suffer from depression, or know someone that does, this book could transform your life and way of thinking about mental health.

Reading and interest level: 14+

Genre: memoir; mental health; depression; psychology; family; friendship

This book contains strong language, drugs/alcohol and some emotionally disturbing material.



Truth & Beauty

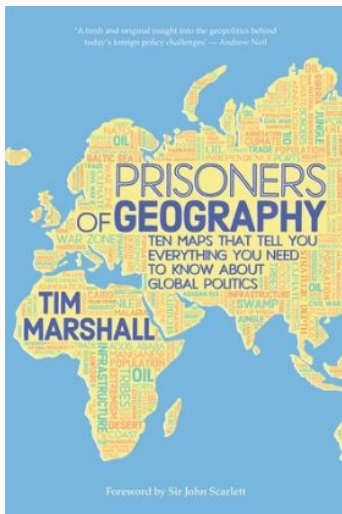
by Ann Patchett

Ann Patchett and Lucy Grealy became best friends when they were both enrolled in the Iowa Writers' Workshop. Over the years, they both became famous writers. But Lucy's childhood cancer had left her with a damaged face, and over many years of failed surgeries, Lucy began to self-destruct. This history of a unique friendship is extremely moving and beautifully written.

Reading and interest level: 16+

Genre: memoir; friendship; mental health

This book contains strong language, sexuality and drugs/alcohol.



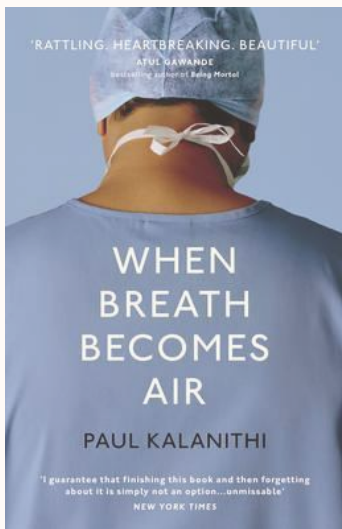
Prisoners of Geography

by Tim Marshall

In this analysis of politics, history and economics, the well-travelled author explains how it all boils down to geography. Oceans, rivers, mountains . . . these geographical features explain both the history and future possibilities for countries both great and small. This is the kind of nonfiction book which totally broadens the reader's perspective of the world.

Reading and interest level: 16+

Genre: geography; history; politics; economics



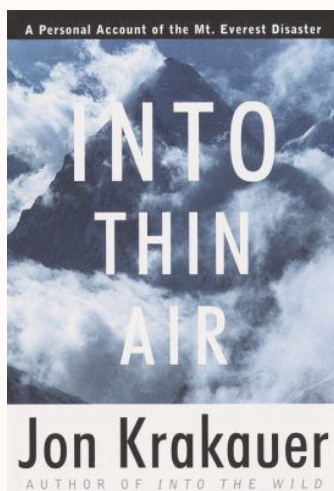
When Breath Becomes Air

by Paul Kalanithi

Paul Kalanithi – a neurosurgeon, husband and father – died of cancer when he was only 37. In this memoir, written while he was already ill, Kalanithi focuses on his search for meaning in life. Although literature was his first love, Kalanithi ultimately decided to study medicine. In this book, he describes his roles as both doctor and patient. Although the subject matter may sound grim, Kalanithi's story is not.

Reading and interest level: 16+

Genre: memoir; medicine; cancer; family; friendship; romance; death



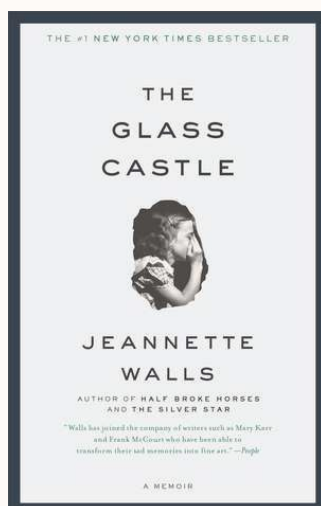
Into Thin Air

By Jon Krakauer

The ambition to climb mountains, to pit one's strength and wits against nature and the unpredictable elements, was an obsession with journalist Jon Krakauer. But when a 1996 expedition to climb Mount Everest ended in disaster for an unlucky few, Krakauer began to question his own actions and motivations. This adventure story is tense, gripping and totally unforgettable.

Reading and interest level: 14+

Genre: memoir; adventure; travel; survival; death; Mount Everest



The Glass Castle

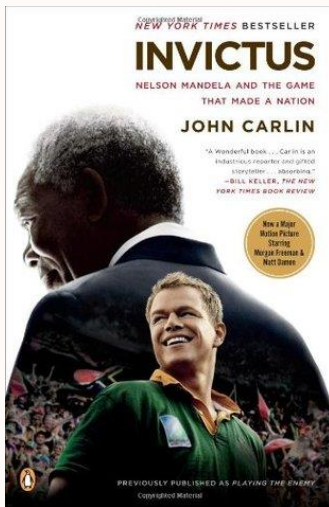
by Jeannette Walls

This is the story of a uniquely dysfunctional American childhood. Perpetually on the run from debt and bad behaviour, the Walls family crisscross the USA until they run out money and end up back in the father's dead-end hometown in West Virginia. It's funny, tragic, sometimes unbelievable and a completely unputdownable good read.

Reading and interest level: 14+

Genre: memoir; family; culture; survival; journey

This book contains strong language, drugs/alcohol and some emotionally disturbing material.



Invictus by John Carlin

When Nelson Mandela became the leader of South Africa, he inherited a country divided by distrust and old hatreds: white against black, and Zulu vs Xhosa. Mandela's struggles to unify South Africa, after the damaging decades of apartheid, finally found a positive focus in the game of rugby. Journalist John Carlin dissects the history of modern history of South Africa in this uplifting novel.

Reading and interest level: 16+

Genre: sport; politics; history; culture; Nelson Mandela; South Africa

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Even though *Hillbilly Elegy* doesn't use a lot of data, I came away with new insights into the multifaceted cultural and family dynamics that contribute to poverty. The fact that *Hillbilly Elegy* is not just an important read but also a great one came as a bit of a surprise to me. There are no big cliffhangers and no "how will it end?"-type mystery propelling this story. We know from the outset that the narrator survives his chaotic, mostly fatherless childhood and lands at Yale Law School.