

PMAT: ESL “Easy Reads”

One question we sometimes get is for easier books for readers who are learning English.

Many of these titles came up again and again as the best, for basic grammar/vocabulary, readable writing style, and also being interesting books!

Core titles to suggest in Adult and YA:

- The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time: Mark Haddon
- Animal Farm: George Orwell
- The House on Mango Street: Sandra Cisneros
- Of Mice and Men: John Steinbeck
- The Outsiders: S.E. Hinton
- The Giver: Lois Lowry
- The Old Man and the Sea: Ernest Hemingway
- Number the Stars: Lois Lowry
- Tuesdays with Morrie: Mitch Albom
- The Lord of the Flies: William Golding
- A Series of Unfortunate Events: Lemony Snicket (*author explains difficult words)

Many of these titles are enduring classics and a great introduction to English language literature for a new reader.

Popular modern authors with basic writing styles and simple story patterns:

- James Patterson
- Stephen King (realistic characters, so reader can learn more how people talk)
- Danielle Steel (verbose, but simple style)
- Sophie Kinsella (1st person stories; realistic)
- Mary Roach (non-fiction but written in conversational style)

My favorite resource was the Recommended Reading List from Loyola’s English Language Learning Program (breaks list down into “Characters featuring children, Fiction featuring animal characters” etc., so less typical genres. Also, the first book they suggest an ESL reader gets is an English language dictionary.)

<https://www.luc.edu/esl/resourcesforcurrentstudents/recommendedreadinglist/>

Don’t forget to suggest Graphic Novels! They can be helpful to ESL readers because the graphic (comic) gives more context, rather like a picture book, without the material being geared to children.