On Becoming a Doctor…

Some books/documentaries you might enjoy before arriving at medical school.

As a student, you will be under intense pressure to read what appears to be huge numbers of tracts directly related to medical science. This is clearly crucial to training to become a doctor. However, there are other books and resources you should not ignore. The practice of medicine is not purely scientific; the art of medicine is ill defined but involvement in other people's lives, other people's worlds, their hopes and fears, demands that you keep in touch with the humanities. The insights that you gain will help you to understand your patients a little better.

Communication skills are central to being a doctor. All doctors have to write, and this skill, often taught well at school, can atrophy. Reading literature can prevent this happening. Fiction is full of lies but these illuminate truths that no cramming will ever help you with.

This suggested resource list, selected by BSMS faculty and students, is by no means comprehensive. It is merely an eclectic selection of things you may enjoy but which also possess a deeper resonance. You have probably read/watched some of them already, and you certainly won’t be examined on any of them. Feel free to pick and choose as you wish; there is no requirement to read/watch them all.

Books:

- A Child Called 'It' by Dave Pelzer
- A Country Doctor's Notebook by Mikhail Bulgakov
- Bad Pharma by Ben Goldacre
- Bad Science by Ben Goldacre
- Being Mortal by Atul Gawande
- Brave New World by Aldous Huxley
- C - Because Cowards get Cancer Too by John Diamond
- Complications: A Surgeon’s Notes on an Imperfect Science by Atul Gawande
- Cutting for Stone by Abraham Verghese
- Darkness Visible by William Styron
- Down & Out in Paris and London by George Orwell
- Five Great Short Stories by Anton Chekhov
- Hunger by Knut Hamsun
- If This Is a Man/The Truce by Primo Levi
- Madame Bovary by Gustav Flaubert
- Me Before You by Jojo Moyes
- Medical Humanities: A Practical Introduction by Deborah Kirklin & Ruth Richardson (Eds)
- Mountains Beyond Mountains by Tracy Kidder
- On Death and Dying by Elisabeth Kubler-Ross
- The Bell Jar by Sylvia Plath
- The Brain by David Eagleman
- The Citadel by AJ Cronin
- The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time by Mark Haddon
- The Doctor, His Patient and The Illness by Michael Balint
- The Emperor of all Maladies: a biography of cancer by Siddharta Mukherjee
- The House of God by Samuel Shem
- The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks by Rebecca Skloot
- The Man Who Mistook his Wife for a Hat by Oliver Sacks
- The Periodic Table by Premi Levi
- The Private Life Of The Brain: Emotion, Consciousness And The Secret Of The Self by Susan Greenfield
- Trust me, I'm a Junior Doctor by Max Pemberton

Documentaries:

- Body Donors Channel 5
- Doctors on Trial BBC One
- Junior Doctors: Blood, Sweat & Tears BBC Three

Websites:

- Brainbook [http://www.realbrainbook.co.uk/](http://www.realbrainbook.co.uk/)
- Futurelearn (free online short courses) [www.futurelearn.com](http://www.futurelearn.com)

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