

How To Read A Book

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Appendix A.

A Recommended Reading List

On the following pages appears a list of books that it would be worth your while to read. We mean the phrase “worth your while” quite seriously. Although not all of the books listed are “great” in any of the commonly accepted meanings of the term, all of them will reward you for the effort you make to read them. All of these books are over most people’s heads—sufficiently so, at any rate, to force most readers to stretch their minds to understand and appreciate them. And that, of course, is the kind of book you should seek out if you want to improve your reading skills, and at the same time discover the best that has been thought and said in our literary tradition.

Some of the books are great in the special sense of the term that we employed in the last chapter. On returning to them, you will always find something new, often many things. They are endlessly re-readable. Another way to say this is that some of the books—we will not say exactly how many, nor will we try to identify them, since to some extent this is an individual judgment—are over the heads of all readers, no matter how skillful. As we observed in the last chapter, these are the works that everyone should make a special effort to seek out. They are the truly great books; they are the books that anyone should choose to take with him to his own desert island.

The list is long, and it may seem a little overwhelming. We urge you not to allow yourself to be abashed by it. In the first place, you are likely to recognize the names of most of the authors. There is nothing here that is so recondite as to be esoteric. More important, we want to remind you that it is wise to begin with those books that interest you most, for whatever reason. As we have pointed out several times, the primary aim is to read well, not widely. You should not be disappointed if you read no more than a handful of the books in a year. The list is not something to be gotten through in any amount of time. It is not a challenge that you can meet only by finishing every item on it. Instead, it is an invitation that you can accept graciously by beginning wherever you feel at home.

The authors are listed chronologically, according to the known or supposed date of their birth. When several works of an author are listed, these too are arranged chronologically, where that is possible. Scholars do not always agree

about the first publication of a book, but this need not concern you. The point to remember is that the list as a whole moves forward through time. That does not necessarily mean that you should read it chronologically, of course. You might even start with the end of the list and read backward to Homer and the Old Testament.

We have not listed all the works of every author. We have usually cited only the more important titles, selecting them, in the case of expository books, to show the diversity of an author's contribution to different fields of learning. In some instances, we have listed an author's Works and specified, in brackets, those titles that are especially important or useful.

There may be differences of opinion about some of the earlier items too, and we may be charged with being prejudiced against some authors that we have not listed at all. We are willing to admit that this may be true, in some cases. This is our list, and it may differ in some respects from lists drawn up by others. But it will not differ very significantly if everyone concurs seriously in the aim of making up a reading program that is worth spending a lifetime on. Ultimately, of course, you should make up your own list, and then go to work on it. It is wise, however, to read a fair number of the books that have been unanimously acclaimed before you branch off on your own. This list is a place to begin.

We want to mention one omission that may strike some readers as unfortunate. The list contains only Western authors and books; there are no Chinese, Japanese, or Indian works. There are several reasons for this. One is that we are not particularly knowledgeable outside of the Western literary tradition, and our recommendations would carry little weight. Another is that there is in the East no single tradition, as there is in the West, and we would have to be learned in all Eastern traditions in order to do the job well. There are very few scholars who have this kind of acquaintance with all the works of the East. Third, there is something to be said for knowing your own tradition before trying to understand that of other parts of the world. Many persons who today attempt to read such books as the *I Ching* or the *Bhagavad-Gita* are baffled, not only because of the inherent difficulty of such works, but also because they have not learned to read well by practicing on the more accessible works—more accessible to them—of their own culture. And finally, the list is long enough as it is.

One other omission requires comment. The list, being one of books, includes the names of few persons known primarily as lyric poets. Some of the writers on the list wrote lyric poems, of course, but they are best known for other, longer works. This fact is not to be taken as reflecting a prejudice on our part against lyric poetry. But we would recommend starting with a good anthology of poetry rather than with the collected works of a single author. Palgrave's *The Golden Treasury* and *The Oxford Book of English Verse* are excellent places to start. These older anthologies should be supplemented by more modern ones—for example, Selden Rodman's *One Hundred Modern Poems*, a collection widely available in paperback that extends the notion of a lyric poem in interesting ways. Since reading lyric poetry requires special skill, we would also recommend any of several available handbooks on the subject—for exam-

ple, Mark Van Doren's *Introduction to Poetry*, an anthology that also contains short discussions of how to read many famous lyrics.

We have listed the books by author and title, but we have not attempted to indicate a publisher or a particular edition. Almost every work on the list is available in some form, and many are available in several editions, both paperback and hard cover. However, we have indicated which authors and titles are included in two sets that we ourselves have edited. *Titles* included in *Great Books of the Western World* are identified by a single asterisk; *authors* represented in *Gateway to the Great Books* are identified by a double asterisk.

1. Homer (9th Century B.C.?)
 - (a) **Iliad*
 - (b) **Odyssey*
2. The Old Testament
3. Aeschylus (c. 525–456 B.C.)
 - (a) *Tragedies
4. Sophocles (c. 495–406 B.C.)
 - (a) *Tragedies
5. Herodotus (c. 484–425 B.C.)
 - (a) **History* (of the Persian Wars)
6. Euripides (c.485–406 B.C.)
 - (a) *Tragedies
(esp. *Medea*, *Hippolytus*, *The Bacchae*)
7. Thucydides (c. 460–400 B.C.)
 - (a) **History of the Peloponnesian War*
8. Hippocrates (c. 460–377? B.C.)
 - (a) *Medical Writings
9. Aristophanes (c.448–380 B.C.)
 - (a) *Comedies
(esp. *The Clouds*, *The Birds*, *The Frogs*)
10. Plato (c. 427–347 B.C.)

- (a) *Dialogues
(esp. *The Republic, Symposium, Phaedo, Meno, Apology, Phaedrus, Protagoras, Gorgias, Sophist, Theaetetus*)
- 11. Aristotle (384–322 B.C.)
 - (a) *Works
(esp. *Organon, Physics, Metaphysics, On the Soul, The Nicomachean Ethics, Politics, Rhetoric, Poetics*)
- 12. **Epicurus (c. 341–270 B.C.)
 - (a) *Letter to Herodotus*
 - (b) *Letter to Menoeceus*
- 13. Euclid (fl.c. 300 B.C.)
 - (a) **Elements (of Geometry)*
- 14. Archimedes (c.287–212 B.C.)
 - (a) *Works
(esp. *On the Equilibrium of Planes, On Floating Bodies, The Sand-Reckoner*)
- 15. Apollonius of Perga (fl.c. 240 B.C.)
 - (a) **On Conic Sections*
- 16. **Cicero (106–43 B.C.)
 - (a) Works
(esp. *Orations, On Friendship, On Old Age*)
- 17. Lucretius (c. 95–55 B.C.)
 - (a) **On the Nature of Things*
- 18. Virgil (70–19 B.C.)
 - (a) *Works
- 19. Horace (65–8 B.C.)
 - (a) Works
(esp. Odes and Epodes, *The Art of Poetry*)
- 20. Livy (59 B.C.-A.D. 17)

- (a) *History of Rome*
- 21. Ovid (43 B.C.-A.D. 17)
 - (a) Works
(esp. *Metamorphoses*)
- 22. **Plutarch (c. 45–120)
 - (a) **Lives of the Noble Grecians and Romans*
 - (b) *Moralia*
- 23. **Tacitus (c. 55–117)
 - (a) **Histories*
 - (b) **Annals*
 - (c) *Agricola*
 - (d) *Germania*
- 24. Nicomachus of Gerasa (fl.c. 100 A.D.)
 - (a) **Introduction to Arithmetic*
- 25. **Epictetus (c. 60–120)
 - (a) **Discourses*
 - (b) *Encheiridion (Handbook)*
- 26. Ptolemy (c. 100–170; fl. 127–151)
 - (a) **Almagest*
- 27. **Lucian (c. 120–c. 190)
 - (a) Works
(esp. *The Way to Write History, The True History, The Sale of Creeds*)
- 28. Marcus Aurelius (121–180)
 - (a) **Meditations*
- 29. Galen (c. 130–200)
 - (a) **On the Natural Faculties*
- 30. The New Testament

31. Plotinus (205–270)
 - (a) **The Enneads*
32. St. Augustine (354–430)
 - (a) Works
(esp. *On the Teacher*, **Confessions*, **The City of God*, **Christian Doctrine*)
33. *The Song of Roland* (12th century?)
34. *The Nibelungenlied* (13th century?)
(The *Völsunga Saga* is the Scandinavian version of the same legend.)
35. *The Saga of Burnt Njal*
36. St. Thomas Aquinas (c. 1225–1274)
 - (a) **Summa Theologica*
37. **Dante Alighieri (1265–1321)
 - (a) Works
 - (b) (esp. *The New Life*, *On Monarchy*, **The Divine Comedy*)
38. Geoffrey Chaucer (c. 1340–1400)
 - (a) Works
(esp. **Troilus and Criseyde*, **Canterbury Tales*)
39. Leonardo da Vinci (1452–1519)
 - (a) *Notebooks*
40. Niccolò Machiavelli (1469–1527)
 - (a) **The Prince*
 - (b) *Discourses on the First Ten Books of Livy*
41. Desiderius Erasmus (c. 1469–1536)
 - (a) *The Praise of Folly*
42. Nicolaus Copernicus (1473–1543)
 - (a) **On the Revolutions of the Heavenly Spheres*
43. Sir Thomas More (c. 1478–1535)

- (a) *Utopia*
- 44. Martin Luther (1483–1546)
 - (a) *Three Treatises*
 - (b) *Table-Talk*
- 45. François Rabelais (c. 1495–1553)
 - (a) **Gargantua and Pantagruel*
- 46. John Calvin (1509–1564)
 - (a) *Institutes of the Christian Religion*
- 47. Michel de Montaigne (1533–1592)
 - (a) **Essays*
- 48. William Gilbert (1540–1603)
 - (a) **On the Loadstone and Magnetic Bodies*
- 49. Miguel de Cervantes (1547–1616)
 - (a) **Don Quixote*
- 50. Edmund Spenser (c. 1552–1599)
 - (a) *Prothalamion*
 - (b) *The Faërie Queene*
- 51. **Francis Bacon (1561–1626)
 - (a) *Essays*
 - (b) **Advancement of Learning*
 - (c) **Novum Organum*
 - (d) **New Atlantis*
- 52. William Shakespeare (1564–1616)
 - (a) *Works
- 53. **Galileo Galilei (1564–1642)
 - (a) *The Starry Messenger*
 - (b) **Dialogues Concerning Two New Sciences*

54. Johannes Kepler (1571–1630)
- (a) **Epitome of Copernican Astronomy*
 - (b) **Concerning the Harmonies of the World*
55. William Harvey (1578–1657)
- (a) **On the Motion of the Heart and Blood in Animals*
 - (b) **On the Circulation of the Blood*
 - (c) **On the Generation of Animals*
56. Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679)
- (a) **The Leviathan*
57. René Descartes (1596–1650)
- (a) **Rules for the Direction of the Mind*
 - (b) **Discourse on Method*
 - (c) **Geometry*
 - (d) **Meditations on First Philosophy*
58. John Milton (1608–1674)
- (a) Works
 - (b) (esp. *the minor poems, **Areopagitica*, **Paradise Lost*, **Samson Agonistes*)
59. **Molière (1622–1673)
- (a) Comedies
 - (b) (esp. *The Miser*, *The School for Wives*, *The Misanthrope*, *The Doctor in Spite of Himself*, *Tartuffe*)
60. Blaise Pascal (1623–1662)
- (a) **The Provincial Letters*
 - (b) **Pensées*
 - (c) *Scientific Treatises
61. Christiaan Huygens (1629–1695)
- (a) **Treatise on Light*
62. Benedict de Spinoza (1632–1677)

- (a) **Ethics*
63. John Locke (1632–1704)
- (a) **Letter Concerning Toleration*
 - (b) **“Of Civil Government” (second treatise in *Two Treatises on Government*)
 - (c) **Essay Concerning Human Understanding*
 - (d) *Thoughts Concerning Education*
64. Jean Baptiste Racine (1639–1699)
- (a) Tragedies
(esp. *Andromache*, *Phaedra*)
65. Isaac Newton (1642–1727)
- (a) **Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy*
 - (b) **Optics*
66. Gottfried Wilhelm von Leibniz (1646–1716)
- (a) *Discourse on Metaphysics*
 - (b) *New Essays Concerning Human Understanding*
 - (c) *Monadology*
67. **Daniel Defoe (1660–1731)
- (a) *Robinson Crusoe*
68. **Jonathan Swift (1667–1745)
- (a) *A Tale of a Tub*
 - (b) *Journal to Stella*
 - (c) **Gulliver’s Travels*
 - (d) *A Modest Proposal*
69. William Congreve (1670–1729)
- (a) *The Way of the World*
70. George Berkeley (1685–1753)
- (a) **Principles of Human Knowledge*
71. Alexander Pope (1688–1744)

- (a) *Essay on Criticism*
 - (b) *Rape of the Lock*
 - (c) *Essay on Man*
72. Charles de Secondat, Baron de Montesquieu (1689–1755)
- (a) *Persian Letters*
 - (b) **Spirit of Laws*
73. **Voltaire (1694–1778)
- (a) *Letters on the English*
 - (b) *Candide*
 - (c) *Philosophical Dictionary*
74. Henry Fielding (1707–1754)
- (a) *Joseph Andrews*
 - (b) **Tom Jones*
75. **Samuel Johnson (1709–1784)
- (a) *The Vanity of Human Wishes*
 - (b) *Dictionary*
 - (c) *Rasselas*
 - (d) *The Lives of the Poets*
(esp. the essays on Milton and Pope)
76. **David Hume (1711–1776)
- (a) *Treatise on Human Nature*
 - (b) *Essays Moral and Political*
 - (c) **An Inquiry Concerning Human Understanding*
77. **Jean Jaques Rousseau (1712–1778)
- (a) **On the Origin of Inequality*
 - (b) **On the Political Economy*
 - (c) *Emile*
 - (d) **The Social Contract*
78. Laurence Sterne (1713–1768)
- (a) **Tristram Shandy*

- (b) *A Sentimental Journey Through France and Italy*
- 79. Adam Smith (1723–1790)
 - (a) *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*
 - (b) **Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*
- 80. ****Immanuel Kant (1724–1804)**
 - (a) **Critique of Pure Reason*
 - (b) **Fundamental Principles of the Metaphysics of Morals*
 - (c) **Critique of Practical Reason*
 - (d) **The Science of Right*
 - (e) **Critique of Judgment*
 - (f) *Perpetual Peace*
- 81. Edward Gibbon (1737–1794)
 - (a) **The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*
 - (b) *Autobiography*
- 82. James Boswell (1740–1795)
 - (a) *Journal*
(esp. London Journal)
 - (b) **Life of Samuel Johnson, LL.D.*
- 83. Antoine Laurent Lavoisier (1743–1794)
 - (a) **Elements of Chemistry*
- 84. John Jay (1745–1829), James Madison (1751–1836), and Alexander Hamilton (1757–1804)
 - (a) **Federalist Papers*
(together with the **Articles of Confederation*, the **Constitution of the United States*, and the **Declaration of Independence*)
- 85. Jeremy Bentham (1748–1832)
 - (a) *Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation*
 - (b) *Theory of Fictions*
- 86. Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749–1832)
 - (a) **Faust*

- (b) *Poetry and Truth*
- 87. Jean Baptiste Joseph Fourier (1768–1830)
 - (a) **Analytical Theory of Heat*
- 88. Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770–1831)
 - (a) *Phenomenology of Spirit*
 - (b) **Philosophy of Right*
 - (c) **Lectures on the Philosophy of History*
- 89. William Wordsworth (1770–1850)
 - (a) Poems
(esp. *Lyrical Ballads*, Lucy poems, sonnets; *The Prelude*)
- 90. Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772–1834)
 - (a) Poems
(esp. “Kubla Khan,” *Rime of the Ancient Mariner*)
 - (b) *Biographia Literaria*
- 91. Jane Austen (1775–1817)
 - (a) *Pride and Prejudice*
 - (b) *Emma*
- 92. **Karl von Clausewitz (1780–1831)
 - (a) *On War*
- 93. Stendhal (1783–1842)
 - (a) *The Red and the Black*
 - (b) *The Charterhouse of Parma*
 - (c) *On Love*
- 94. George Gordon, Lord Byron (1788–1824)
 - (a) *Don Juan*
- 95. **Arthur Schopenhauer (1788–1860)
 - (a) *Studies in Pessimism*
- 96. **Michael Faraday (1791–1867)

- (a) *Chemical History of a Candle*
 - (b) **Experimental Researches in Electricity*
97. **Charles Lyell (1797–1875)
- (a) *Principles of Geology*
98. Auguste Comte (1798–1857)
- (a) *The Positive Philosophy*
99. **Honoré de Balzac (1799–1850)
- (a) *Père Goriot*
 - (b) *Eugénie Grandet*
100. **Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803–1882)
- (a) *Representative Men*
 - (b) *Essays*
 - (c) *Journal*
101. **Nathaniel Hawthorne (1804–1864)
- (a) *The Scarlet Letter*
102. **Alexis de Tocqueville (1805–1859)
- (a) *Democracy in America*
103. **John Stuart Mill (1806–1873)
- (a) *A System of Logic*
 - (b) **On Liberty*
 - (c) **Representative Government*
 - (d) **Utilitarianism*
 - (e) *The Subjection of Women*
 - (f) *Autobiography*
104. **Charles Darwin (1809–1882)
- (a) **The Origin of Species*
 - (b) **The Descent of Man*
 - (c) *Autobiography*
105. **Charles Dickens (1812–1870)

- (a) Works
(esp. *Pickwick Papers*, *David Copperfield*, *Hard Times*)
- 106. **Claude Bernard (1813–1878)
 - (a) *Introduction to the Study of Experimental Medicine*
- 107. **Henry David Thoreau (1817–1862)
 - (a) *Civil Disobedience*
 - (b) *Walden*
- 108. Karl Marx (1818–1883)
 - (a) **Capital*
(together with the **Communist Manifesto*)
- 109. George Eliot (1819–1880)
 - (a) *Adam Bede*
 - (b) *Middlemarch*
- 110. **Herman Melville (1819–1891)
 - (a) **Moby Dick*
 - (b) *Billy Budd*
- 111. **Fyodor Dostoevsky (1821–1881)
 - (a) *Crime and Punishment*
 - (b) *The Idiot*
 - (c) **The Brothers Karamazov*
- 112. **Gustave Flaubert (1821–1880)
 - (a) *Madame Bovary*
 - (b) *Three Stories*
- 113. **Henrik Ibsen (1828–1906)
 - (a) Plays
(esp. *Hedda Gabler*, *A Doll's House*, *The Wild Duck*)
- 114. **Leo Tolstoy (1828–1910)
 - (a) **War and Peace*
 - (b) *Anna Karenina*

- (c) *What Is Art?*
 - (d) *Twenty-three Tales*
115. **Mark Twain (1835–1910)
- (a) *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*
 - (b) *The Mysterious Stranger*
116. **William James (1842–1910)
- (a) **The Principles of Psychology*
 - (b) *The Varieties of Religious Experience*
 - (c) *Pragmatism*
 - (d) *Essays in Radical Empiricism*
117. **Henry James (1843–1916)
- (a) *The American*
 - (b) *The Ambassadors*
118. Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche (1844–1900)
- (a) *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*
 - (b) *Beyond Good and Evil*
 - (c) *The Genealogy of Morals*
 - (d) *The Will to Power*
119. Jules Henri Poincaré (1854–1912)
- (a) *Science and Hypothesis*
 - (b) *Science and Method*
120. Sigmund Freud (1856–1939)
- (a) **The Interpretation of Dreams*
 - (b) **Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis*
 - (c) **Civilization and Its Discontents*
 - (d) **New Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis*
121. **George Bernard Shaw (1856–1950)
- (a) Plays (and Prefaces)
(esp. *Man and Superman*, *Major Barbara*, *Caesar and Cleopatra*,
Pygmalion, *Saint Joan*)

122. **Max Planck (1858–1947)
- (a) *Origin and Development of the Quantum Theory*
 - (b) *Where Is Science Going?*
 - (c) *Scientific Autobiography*
123. Henri Bergson (1859–1941)
- (a) *Time and Free Will*
 - (b) *Matter and Memory*
 - (c) *Creative Evolution*
 - (d) *The Two Sources of Morality and Religion*
124. **John Dewey (1859–1952)
- (a) *How We Think*
 - (b) *Democracy and Education*
 - (c) *Experience and Nature*
 - (d) *Logic, the Theory of Inquiry*
125. **Alfred North Whitehead (1861–1947)
- (a) *An Introduction to Mathematics*
 - (b) *Science and the Modern World*
 - (c) *The Aims of Education and Other Essays*
 - (d) *Adventures of Ideas*
126. **George Santayana (1863–1952)
- (a) *The Life of Reason*
 - (b) *Skepticism and Animal Faith*
 - (c) *Persons and Places*
127. Nikolai Lenin (1870–1924)
- (a) *The State and Revolution*
128. Marcel Proust (1871–1922)
- (a) *Remembrance of Things Past*
129. **Bertrand Russell (1872–1970)
- (a) *The Problems of Philosophy*

- (b) *The Analysis of Mind*
 - (c) *An Inquiry into Meaning and Truth*
 - (d) *Human Knowledge; Its Scope and Limits*
130. **Thomas Mann (1875–1955)
- (a) *The Magic Mountain*
 - (b) *Joseph and His Brothers*
131. **Albert Einstein (1879–1955)
- (a) *The Meaning of Relativity*
 - (b) *On the Method of Theoretical Physics*
 - (c) *The Evolution of Physics* (with L. Infeld)
132. **James Joyce (1882–1941)
- (a) “The Dead” in *Dubliners*
 - (b) *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*
 - (c) *Ulysses*
133. Jacques Maritain (1882–)
- (a) *Art and Scholasticism*
 - (b) *The Degrees of Knowledge*
 - (c) *The Rights of Man and Natural Law*
 - (d) *True Humanism*
134. Franz Kafka (1883–1924)
- (a) *The Trial*
 - (b) *The Castle*
135. Arnold Toynbee (1889–)
- (a) *A Study of History*
 - (b) *Civilization on Trial*
136. Jean Paul Sartre (1905–)
- (a) *Nausea*
 - (b) *No Exit*
 - (c) *Being and Nothingness*
137. Aleksandr I. Solzhenitsyn (1918–)
- (a) *The First Circle*
 - (b) *The Cancer Ward*