

# TOP 30 Books Everyone MUST READ

Everyone should read at least once these 30 books — some are well-known classics, others are modern giants. All are well worth reading at least once in your life!



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## ☐ 1. *To Kill a Mockingbird*, by Harper Lee

Harper Lee's Pulitzer prize-winning masterwork of honor and injustice in the deep south - and the heroism of one man in the face of blind and violent hatred, available now for the first time as a digital audiobook.

One of the best-loved stories of all time, *To Kill a Mockingbird* has been translated into more than 40 languages, sold more than 30 million copies worldwide, served as the basis for an enormously popular motion picture, and was voted one of the best novels of the 20th century by librarians across the country. A gripping, heart-wrenching, and wholly remarkable tale of coming-of-age in a South poisoned by virulent prejudice, it views a world of great beauty and savage inequities through the eyes of a young girl, as her father—a crusading local lawyer - risks everything to defend a black man unjustly accused of a terrible crime.

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## ☐ 2. *1984*, by George Orwell

Big Brother is watching you....

1984 is the year in which it happens. The world is divided into three superstates. In Oceania, the Party's power is absolute. Every action, word, gesture and thought is monitored under the watchful eye of Big Brother and the Thought Police. In the Ministry of Truth, the Party's department for propaganda, Winston Smith's job is to edit the past. Over time, the impulse to escape the machine and live independently takes hold of him and he embarks on a secret and forbidden love affair. As he writes the words 'DOWN WITH BIG BROTHER', his personal rebellion begins....

[George Orwell's](#) masterpiece is the definitive dystopian novel and one of the most influential works of the twentieth century.

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☐ 3. Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone, by J.K. Rowling

In this stunning new edition of *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* experience the story as never before. J.K. Rowling's complete and unabridged text is accompanied by full-color illustrations on nearly every page and eight exclusive, interactive paper craft elements: Readers will open Harry's Hogwarts letter, reveal the magical entryway to Diagon Alley, make a sumptuous feast appear in the Great Hall, and more. Designed and illustrated by award-winning design studio MinaLima – best known for establishing the visual graphic style of the Harry Potter and Fantastic Beasts films – this edition is sure to be a keepsake for Harry Potter fans, a beautiful addition to any collector's bookshelf, and an enchanting way to introduce the first book in this beloved series to a new generation of readers.

<https://amzn.to/37W7KHi>

☐ 4. The Lord of the Rings, by J.R.R. Tolkien

One Ring to rule them all, One Ring to find them, One Ring to bring them all and in the darkness bind them

In ancient times the Rings of Power were crafted by the Elven-smiths, and Sauron, the Dark Lord, forged the One Ring, filling it with his own power so that he could rule all others. But the One Ring was taken from him, and though he sought it throughout Middle-earth, it remained lost to him. After many ages it fell by chance into the hands of the hobbit Bilbo Baggins.

From Sauron's fastness in the Dark Tower of Mordor, his power spread far and wide. Sauron gathered all the Great Rings to him, but always he searched for the One Ring that would complete his dominion.

When Bilbo reached his eleventy-first birthday he disappeared, bequeathing to his young cousin Frodo the Ruling Ring and a perilous quest: to journey across Middle-earth, deep into the shadow of the Dark Lord, and destroy the Ring by casting it into the Cracks of Doom.

The Lord of the Rings tells of the great quest undertaken by Frodo and the Fellowship of the Ring: Gandalf the Wizard; the hobbits Merry, Pippin, and Sam; Gimli the Dwarf; Legolas the Elf; Boromir of Gondor; and a tall, mysterious stranger called Strider.

This new edition includes the fiftieth-anniversary fully corrected text setting and, for the first time, an extensive new index.

J.R.R. Tolkien (1892-1973), beloved throughout the world as the creator of *The Hobbit*, *The Lord of the Rings*, and *The Silmarillion*, was a professor of Anglo-Saxon at Oxford, a fellow of Pembroke College, and a fellow of Merton College until his retirement in 1959. His chief interest was the linguistic aspects of the early English written tradition, but while he studied classic works of the past, he was creating a set of his own.

☐ 5. The Great Gatsby, by F. Scott Fitzgerald

*The Great Gatsby*, F. Scott Fitzgerald's third book, stands as the supreme achievement of his career. First published in 1925, this quintessential novel of the Jazz Age has been acclaimed by generations of readers. The story of the mysteriously wealthy Jay Gatsby and his love for the beautiful Daisy Buchanan, of lavish parties on Long Island at a time when *The New York Times* noted "gin was the national drink and sex the national obsession," it is an exquisitely crafted tale of America in the 1920s

☐ 6. Pride and Prejudice, by Jane Austen

Few have failed to be charmed by the witty and independent spirit of Elizabeth Bennet in Austen's beloved classic *Pride and Prejudice*. When Elizabeth Bennet first meets eligible bachelor Fitzwilliam Darcy, she thinks him arrogant and conceited; he is indifferent to her good looks and lively mind. When she later discovers that Darcy has involved himself in the troubled relationship between his friend Bingley and her beloved sister Jane, she is determined to dislike him more than ever. In the sparkling comedy of manners that follows, Jane Austen shows us the folly of judging by first impressions and superbly evokes the friendships, gossip and snobberies of provincial middle-class life. This Penguin Classics edition, based on Austen's first edition, contains the original Penguin Classics introduction by Tony Tanner and an updated introduction and notes by Viven Jones. For more than seventy years, Penguin has been the leading publisher of classic literature in the English-speaking world. With more than 1,700 titles, Penguin Classics represents a global bookshelf of the best works throughout history and across genres and disciplines. Readers trust the series to provide authoritative texts enhanced by introductions and notes by distinguished scholars and contemporary authors, as well as up-to-date translations by award-winning translators.

☐ 7. The Diary Of A Young Girl, by Anne Frank

**Discovered in the attic in which she spent the last years of her life, Anne Frank's remarkable diary has become a world classic—a powerful reminder of the horrors of war and an eloquent testament to the human spirit.** In 1942, with the Nazis occupying Holland, a thirteen-year-old Jewish girl and her family fled their home in Amsterdam and went into hiding. For the next two years, until their whereabouts were betrayed to the Gestapo, the Franks and another family lived cloistered in the "Secret Annexe" of an old office building. Cut off from the outside world, they faced hunger, boredom, the constant cruelties of living in confined quarters, and the ever-present threat of discovery and death. In her diary Anne Frank recorded vivid impressions of her experiences during this period. By turns thoughtful, moving, and surprisingly humorous, her account offers a fascinating commentary on human courage and frailty and a compelling self-portrait of a sensitive and spirited young woman whose promise was tragically cut short.

☐ 8. The Book Thief, by Markus Zusak

*When Death has a story to tell, you listen* It is 1939. Nazi Germany. The country is holding its breath. Death has never been busier, and will become busier still. Liesel Meminger is a foster girl living outside of Munich, who scratches out a meager existence for herself by stealing when she encounters something she can't resist—books. With the help of her accordion-playing foster father, she learns to read and shares her stolen books with her neighbors during bombing raids as well as with the Jewish man hidden in her basement.

☐ 9. The Hobbit, by J.R.R. Tolkien

A great modern classic and the prelude to *The Lord of the Rings*. Bilbo Baggins is a hobbit who enjoys a comfortable, unambitious life, rarely traveling any farther than his pantry or cellar. But his contentment is disturbed when the wizard Gandalf and a company of dwarves arrive on his doorstep one day to whisk him away on an adventure. They have launched a plot to raid the treasure hoard guarded by Smaug the Magnificent, a large and very dangerous dragon. Bilbo reluctantly joins their quest, unaware that on his journey to the Lonely Mountain he will encounter both a magic ring and a frightening creature known as Gollum.

☐ 10. *Little Women*, by Louisa May Alcott

The quintessential American family novel, *Little Women* captured readers' hearts right from the start. A bestseller from the time it was originally published in 1868, it tells the story of the beloved March sisters: Meg, Beth, Jo, and Amy. The four girls couldn't be more different, but with their father fighting in the Civil War and their mother supporting the family, the sisters have to rely on each other as they grow up and grow together. Their story continues in *Good Wives* as the girls venture out on their own, experiencing love, loss, and the importance of family. *Little Men* furthers Jo's story and introduces new protagonists when Jo opens a school for boys in her late aunt's estate. As she takes in an orphaned street musician and deals with tireless troublemakers, Jo and her family's lives are forever changed. The joys, sorrows, and adventures of the boys' lives continue as we meet them ten years later in *Jo's Boys*, the final book of the quartet.

☐ 11. *Fahrenheit 451*, by Ray Bradbury

Guy Montag is a fireman. His job is to destroy the most illegal of commodities, the printed book, along with the houses in which they are hidden. Montag never questions the destruction and ruin his actions produce, returning each day to his bland life and wife, Mildred, who spends all day with her television "family." But when he meets an eccentric young neighbor, Clarisse, who introduces him to a past where people didn't live in fear and to a present where one sees the world through the ideas in books instead of the mindless chatter of television, Montag begins to question everything he has ever known.

☐ 12. *Jane Eyre*, by Charlotte Brontë

Jane Eyre follows the experiences of its eponymous heroine, her growth to adulthood and her love for Mr. Rochester, the brooding master of Thornfield Hall. This novel revolutionized prose fiction by being the first to focus on its protagonist's moral and spiritual development through an intimate first-person narrative, where actions and events are coloured by a psychological intensity. The book contains elements of social criticism and is considered to be ahead of its time because of Jane's individualistic character and how the novel approaches the topics of class, sexuality, religion, and feminism. Charlotte Brontë has been called the "first historian of the private consciousness", and the literary ancestor of writers like Proust and Joyce.

☐ 13. *Animal Farm*, by George Orwell

*"All animals are equal, but some animals are more equal than others."* A farm is taken over by its overworked, mistreated animals. With flaming idealism and stirring slogans, they set out to create a paradise of progress, justice, and equality. Thus the stage is set for one of the most telling satiric fables ever penned—a razor-edged fairy tale for grown-ups that records the evolution from revolution against tyranny to a totalitarianism just as terrible.

☐ 14. *Gone with the Wind*, by Margaret Mitchell

Widely considered The Great American Novel, and often remembered for its epic film version, *Gone With the Wind* explores the depth of human passions with an intensity as bold as its setting in the red hills of Georgia. A superb piece of storytelling, it vividly depicts the drama of the Civil War and Reconstruction. This is the tale of Scarlett O'Hara, the spoiled, manipulative daughter of a wealthy plantation owner, who arrives at young womanhood just in time to see the Civil War forever change her way of life. A sweeping story of tangled passion and courage, in the pages of *Gone With the Wind*, Margaret Mitchell brings to life the unforgettable characters that have captured readers for over seventy years.

☐ 15. *The Catcher in the Rye*, by J.D. Salinger

The hero-narrator of *The Catcher in the Rye* is an ancient child of sixteen, a native New Yorker named Holden Caulfield. Through circumstances that tend to preclude adult, secondhand description, he leaves his prep school in Pennsylvania and goes underground in New York City for three days. The boy himself is at once too simple and too complex for us to make any final comment about him or his story. Perhaps the safest thing we can say about Holden is that he was born in the world not just strongly attracted to beauty but, almost, hopelessly impaled on it. There are many voices in this novel: children's voices, adult voices, underground voices—but Holden's voice is the most eloquent of all. Transcending his own vernacular, yet remaining marvelously faithful to it, he issues a perfectly articulated cry of mixed pain and pleasure. However, like most lovers and clowns and poets of the higher orders, he keeps most of the pain to, and for, himself. The pleasure he gives away, or sets aside, with all his heart. It is there for the reader who can handle it to keep.

☐ 16. *Charlotte's Web*, by E.B. White

*Some Pig. Humble. Radiant.* These are the words in *Charlotte's Web*, high up in Zuckerman's barn. Charlotte's spiderweb tells of her feelings for a little pig named Wilbur, who simply wants a friend. They also express the love of a girl named Fern, who saved Wilbur's life when he was born the runt of his litter.

E. B. White's Newbery Honor Book is a tender novel of friendship, love, life, and death that will continue to be enjoyed by generations to come. It contains illustrations by Garth Williams, the acclaimed illustrator of E. B. White's *Stuart Little* and Laura Ingalls Wilder's Little House series, among many other books.

Whether enjoyed in the classroom or for homeschooling or independent reading, *Charlotte's Web* is a proven favorite.

☐ 17. *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*, by C.S. Lewis

Four adventurous siblings—Peter, Susan, Edmund, and Lucy Pevensie—step through a wardrobe door and into the land of Narnia, a land frozen in eternal winter and enslaved by the power of the White Witch. But when almost all hope is lost, the return of the Great Lion, Aslan, signals a great change . . . and a great sacrifice.

Open the door and enter a new world! *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* is the second book in C. S. Lewis's classic fantasy series, which has been captivating readers of all ages with a magical land and unforgettable characters for over sixty years.

This is a stand-alone read, but if you would like to discover more about Narnia, pick up *The Horse and His Boy*, the third book in *The Chronicles of Narnia*

☐ 18. **The Grapes of Wrath, by John Steinbeck**

First published in 1939, Steinbeck's Pulitzer Prize-winning epic of the Great Depression chronicles the Dust Bowl migration of the 1930s and tells the story of one Oklahoma farm family, the Joads—driven from their homestead and forced to travel west to the promised land of California. Out of their trials and their repeated collisions against the hard realities of an America divided into Haves and Have-Nots evolves a drama that is intensely human yet majestic in its scale and moral vision, elemental yet plainspoken, tragic but ultimately stirring in its human dignity. A portrait of the conflict between the powerful and the powerless, of one man's fierce reaction to injustice, and of one woman's stoical strength, the novel captures the horrors of the Great Depression and probes into the very nature of equality and justice in America. At once a naturalistic epic, captivity narrative, road novel, and transcendental gospel, Steinbeck's powerful landmark novel is perhaps the most American of American Classics.

☐ 19. **Lord of the Flies, by William Golding**

At the dawn of the next world war, a plane crashes on an uncharted island, stranding a group of schoolboys. At first, with no adult supervision, their freedom is something to celebrate. This far from civilization they can do anything they want. Anything. But as order collapses, as strange howls echo in the night, as terror begins its reign, the hope of adventure seems as far removed from reality as the hope of being rescued.

☐ 20. **The Kite Runner, by Khaled Hosseini**

The unforgettable, heartbreaking story of the unlikely friendship between a wealthy boy and the son of his father's servant, caught in the tragic sweep of history, *The Kite Runner* transports readers to Afghanistan at a tense and crucial moment of change and destruction. A powerful story of friendship, it is also about the power of reading, the price of betrayal, and the possibility of redemption; and an exploration of the power of fathers over sons—their love, their sacrifices, their lies. Since its publication in 2003 *Kite Runner* has become a beloved, one-of-a-kind classic of contemporary literature, touching millions of readers, and launching the career of one of America's most treasured writers.

☐ 21. **Of Mice and Men, by John Steinbeck**

**A controversial tale of friendship and tragedy during the Great Depression** They are an unlikely pair: George is "small and quick and dark of face"; Lennie, a man of tremendous size, has the mind of a young child. Yet they have formed a "family," clinging together in the face of loneliness and alienation. Laborers in California's dusty vegetable fields, they hustle work when they can, living a hand-to-mouth existence. For George and Lennie have a plan: to own an acre of land and a shack they can call their own. When they land jobs on a ranch in the Salinas Valley, the fulfillment of their dream seems to be within their grasp. But even George cannot guard Lennie from the provocations of a flirtatious woman, nor predict the consequences of Lennie's unswerving obedience to the things George taught him.

☐ 22. **A Tale of Two Cities, by Charles Dickens**

It was the time of the French Revolution — a time of great change and great danger. It was a time when injustice was met by a lust for vengeance, and rarely was a distinction made between the innocent and the guilty. Against this tumultuous historical backdrop, Dickens' great story of unsurpassed adventure and courage unfolds. Unjustly imprisoned for 18 years in the Bastille, Dr. Alexandre Manette is reunited with his daughter, Lucie, and safely transported from France to England. It would seem that they could take up the threads of their lives in peace. As fate would have it though, the pair are summoned to the Old Bailey to testify against a young Frenchman — Charles Darnay — falsely accused of treason. Strangely enough, Darnay bears an uncanny resemblance to another man in the courtroom, the dissolute lawyer's clerk Sydney Carton. It is a coincidence that saves Darnay from certain doom more than once. Brilliantly plotted, the novel is rich in drama, romance, and heroics that culminate in a daring prison escape in the shadow of the guillotine.

☐ 23. **Romeo and Juliet, by William Shakespeare**

Romeo and Juliet is a tragedy written by William Shakespeare early in his career about two young star-crossed lovers whose deaths ultimately reconcile their feuding families.

☐ 24. **The Hitchhikers Guide to the Galaxy, by Douglas Adams**

**In one complete volume, here are the five classic novels from Douglas Adams's beloved Hitchhiker series** *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* (Nominated as one of America's best-loved novels by PBS's *The Great American Read*) Seconds before the Earth is demolished for a galactic freeway, Arthur Dent is saved by Ford Prefect, a researcher for the revised *Guide*. Together they stick out their thumbs to the stars and begin a wild journey through time and space. *The Restaurant at the End of the Universe* The moment before annihilation at the hands of warmongers is a curious time to crave tea. It could only happen to the cosmically displaced Arthur Dent and his comrades as they hurtle across the galaxy in a desperate search for a place to eat. *Life, the Universe and Everything* The unhappy inhabitants of planet Krikkit are sick of looking at the night sky— so they plan to destroy it. The universe, that is. Now only five individuals can avert Armageddon: mild-mannered Arthur Dent and his stalwart crew. *So Long, and Thanks for All the Fish* Back on Earth, Arthur Dent is ready to believe that the past eight years were all just a figment of his stressed-out imagination. But a gift-wrapped fishbowl with a cryptic inscription thrusts him back to reality. So to speak. *Mostly Harmless* Just when Arthur Dent makes the terrible mistake of starting to enjoy life, all hell breaks loose. Can he save the Earth from total obliteration? Can

he save the *Guide* from a hostile alien takeover? Can he save his daughter from herself?

☐ 25. *Wuthering Heights*, by Emily Bronte

Emily Brontë's only novel endures as a work of tremendous and far-reaching influence. The Penguin Classics edition is the definitive version of the text, edited with an introduction by Pauline Nestor. Lockwood, the new tenant of Thrushcross Grange, situated on the bleak Yorkshire moors, is forced to seek shelter one night at Wuthering Heights, the home of his landlord. There he discovers the history of the tempestuous events that took place years before. What unfolds is the tale of the intense love between the gypsy founding Heathcliff and Catherine Earnshaw. Catherine, forced to choose between passionate, tortured Heathcliff and gentle, well-bred Edgar Linton, surrendered to the expectations of her class. As Heathcliff's bitterness and vengeance at his betrayal is visited upon the next generation, their innocent heirs must struggle to escape the legacy of the past.

☐ 26. *The Color Purple*, by Alice Walker

A powerful cultural touchstone of modern American literature, *The Color Purple* depicts the lives of African American women in early twentieth-century rural Georgia. Separated as girls, sisters Celie and Nettie sustain their loyalty to and hope in each other across time, distance and silence. Through a series of letters spanning twenty years, first from Celie to God, then the sisters to each other despite the unknown, the novel draws readers into its rich and memorable portrayals of Celie, Nettie, Shug Avery and Sofia and their experience. *The Color Purple* broke the silence around domestic and sexual abuse, narrating the lives of women through their pain and struggle, companionship and growth, resilience and bravery. Deeply compassionate and beautifully imagined, Alice Walker's epic carries readers on a spirit-affirming journey towards redemption and love.

☐ 27. *Alice in Wonderland*, by Lewis Carroll

Tumble down the rabbit hole with Alice for a fantastical adventure from Walt Disney Pictures and Tim Burton. Inviting and magical, ALICE IN WONDERLAND is an imaginative new twist on one of the most beloved stories of all time. Alice (Mia Wasikowska), now 19 years old, returns to the whimsical world she first entered as a child and embarks on a journey to discover her true destiny. This Wonderland is a world beyond your imagination and unlike anything you've seen before. The extraordinary characters you've loved come to life richer and more colorful than ever. There's the Mad Hatter (Johnny Depp), the White Queen (Anne Hathaway), the Red Queen (Helena Bonham Carter), the White Rabbit (Michael Sheen) and more. A triumphant cinematic experience -- ALICE IN WONDERLAND is an incredible feast for your eyes, ears and heart that will captivate audiences of all sizes.

☐ 28. *Frankenstein*, by Mary Shelley

This Seedbox Classics edition of *Frankenstein* includes illustrations. *Frankenstein* by Mary Shelley is a novel about a horrific creature produced by an unorthodox science experiment.

☐ 29. *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, by Mark Twain

Referring to *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, H. L. Mencken noted that his discovery of this classic American novel was "the most stupendous event of my whole life"; Ernest Hemingway declared that "all modern American literature stems from this one book," while T. S. Eliot called Huck "one of the permanent symbolic figures of fiction, not unworthy to take a place with Ulysses, Faust, Don Quixote, Don Juan, Hamlet." The novel's preeminence derives from its wonderfully imaginative re-creation of boyhood adventures along the Mississippi River, its inspired characterization, the author's remarkable ear for dialogue, and the book's understated development of serious underlying themes: "natural" man versus "civilized" society, the evils of slavery, the innate value and dignity of human beings, and other topics. Most of all, *Huckleberry Finn* is a wonderful story, filled with high adventure and unforgettable characters.

☐ 30. *Slaughterhouse-Five*, by Kurt Vonnegut

*Slaughterhouse-Five* is the now famous parable of Billy Pilgrim, a World War II veteran and POW who has, in the later stage of his life, become "unstuck in time" and who experiences at will (or unwillingly) all known events of his chronology out of order and sometimes simultaneously.

Traumatized by the bombing of Dresden at the time he had been imprisoned, Pilgrim drifts through all events and history, sometimes deeply implicated, sometimes a witness. He is surrounded by Vonnegut's usual large cast of continuing characters (notably here the hack science fiction writer Kilgore Trout and the alien Tralfamadorians, who oversee his life and remind him constantly that there is no causation, no order, no motive to existence). The "unstuck" nature of Pilgrim's experience may constitute an early novelistic use of what we now call post-traumatic stress disorder; then again, Pilgrim's aliens may be as "real" as Dresden is real to him.

Struggling to find some purpose, order, or meaning to his existence and humanity's, Pilgrim meets the beautiful and mysterious Montana Wildhack (certainly the author's best character name), has a child with her, and drifts on some supernal plane, finally, in which Kilgore Trout, the Tralfamadorians, Montana Wildhack, and the ruins of Dresden do not merge but rather disperse through all planes of existence.

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