

100 Must-Read Books: The Essential Man's Library

1. The Great Gatsby by *F. Scott Fitzgerald*
2. The Prince by *Niccolo Machiavelli*
3. Slaughterhouse-Five by *Kurt Vonnegut*
4. 1984 by *George Orwell*
5. The Republic by *Plato*
6. Brothers Karamazov by *Fyodor Dostoevsky*
7. The Catcher in the Rye by *J.D. Salinger*
8. The Wealth of Nations by *Adam Smith*
9. For Whom the Bell Tolls by *Ernest Hemingway*
10. The Picture of Dorian Gray by *Oscar Wilde*
11. The Grapes of Wrath by *John Steinbeck*
12. Brave New World by *Aldous Huxley*
13. How To Win Friends And Influence People by *Dale Carnegie*
14. Call of the Wild by *Jack London*
15. The Rise of Theodore Roosevelt by *Edmund Morris*
16. Swiss Family Robinson by *Johann David Wyss*
17. Dharma Bums by *Jack Kerouac*
18. The Iliad and Odyssey of Homer
19. Catch-22 by *Joseph Heller*
20. Walden by *Henry David Thoreau*
21. Lord of the Flies by *William Golding*
22. The Master and Margarita by *Mikhail Bulgakov*
23. Bluebeard by *Kurt Vonnegut*
24. Atlas Shrugged by *Ayn Rand*
25. The Metamorphosis by *Franz Kafka*
26. Another Roadside Attraction by *Tom Robbins*
27. White Noise by *Don DeLillo*
28. Ulysses by *James Joyce*
29. The Young Man's Guide by *William Alcott*
30. Blood Meridian, or the Evening Redness in the West by *Cormac McCarthy*
31. Seek: Reports from the Edges of America & Beyond by *Denis Johnson*
32. Crime And Punishment by *Fyodor Dostoevsky*
33. Steppenwolf by *Herman Hesse*
34. The Book of Deeds of Arms and of Chivalry by *Christine De Pizan*
35. The Art of Warfare by *Sun Tzu*
36. Don Quixote by *Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra*
37. Into the Wild by *Jon Krakauer*
38. The Divine Comedy by *Dante Alighieri*
39. The Hobbit by *JRR Tolkien*
40. The Rough Riders by *Theodore Roosevelt*
41. East of Eden by *John Steinbeck*
42. Leviathan by *Thomas Hobbes*
43. The Thin Red Line by *James Jones*
44. Adventures of Huckleberry Finn by *Mark Twain*
45. The Politics by *Aristotle*
46. First Edition of the The Boy Scout Handbook
47. Cyrano de Bergerac by *Edmond Rostand*
48. Tropic of Cancer by *Henry Miller*
49. The Crisis by *Winston Churchill*

50. The Naked and The Dead by *Norman Mailer*
51. Hatchet by *Gary Paulsen*
52. Animal Farm by *George Orwell*
53. Tarzan of the Apes by *Edgar Rice Burroughs*
54. Beyond Good and Evil by *Freidrich Nietzsche*
55. The Federalist Papers by *Alexander Hamilton, John Jay, and James Madison*
56. Moby Dick by *Herman Melville*
57. Essential Manners for Men by *Peter Post*
58. Frankenstein by *Mary Wollstonecraft Shelly*
59. Hamlet by *Shakespeare*
60. The Boys of Summer by *Roger Kahn*
61. A Separate Peace by *John Knowles*
62. A Farewell To Arms by *Ernest Hemingway*
63. The Stranger by *Albert Camus*
64. Robinson Crusoe by *Daniel Dafoe*
65. The Pearl by *John Steinbeck*
66. On the Road by *Jack Kerouac*
67. Treasure Island by *Robert Louis Stevenson*
68. Confederacy of Dunces by *John Kennedy Toole*
69. Foucault's Pendulum by *Umberto Eco*
70. The Great Railway Bazaar by *Paul Theroux*
71. Fear and Trembling by *Soren Kierkegaard*
72. Undaunted Courage by *Stephen Ambrose*
73. Paradise Lost by *John Milton*
74. Cannery Row by *John Steinbeck*
75. American Boys' Handy Book
76. Into Thin Air by *Jon Krakauer*
77. King Solomon's Mines by *H. Rider Haggard*
78. The Idiot by *Fyodor Dostoevsky*
79. A River Runs Through It by *Norman F. Maclean*
80. The Island of Dr. Moreau by *H.G. Wells*
81. Malcolm X: The Autobiography
82. Theodore Rex by *Edmund Morris*
83. The Count of Monte Cristo by *Alexandre Dumas*
84. All Quiet on The Western Front by *Erich Maria Remarq*
85. The Red Badge of Courage by *Stephen Crane*
86. Lives of the Noble Greeks and Romans by *Plutarch*
87. The Strenuous Life by *Theodore Roosevelt*
88. The Bible
89. Lonesome Dove by *Larry McMurtry*
90. The Maltese Falcon by *Dashiell Hammett*
91. The Long Goodbye by *Raymond Chandler*
92. To Kill a Mockingbird by *Harper Lee*
93. The Dangerous Book for Boys by *Conn and Hal Iggulden*
94. The Killer Angels by *Michael Shaara*
95. The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin
96. The Histories by *Herodotus*
97. From Here to Eternity by *James Jones*
98. The Frontier in American History by *Frederick Jackson Turner*
99. Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance by *Robert Pirsig*
100. Self Reliance by *Ralph Waldo Emerson*

***The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald**

Set on the East Coast in the roaring 20's, this American novel is a classic. From it we learn that often the wanting of something is better than actually having it. It is relevant to every man's life. Furthermore, one true friend is worth infinitely more than a multitude of acquaintances.

"He smiled understandingly—much more than understandingly. It was one of those rare smiles... It faced—or seemed to face—the whole external world for an instant, and then concentrated on you with an irresistible prejudice in your favor."

***The Prince* by Niccolo Machiavelli**

Considered by most to be the authoritative text on statesmanship and power (how to obtain it as well as an illustration of its trappings), although certainly a shrewd one.

From this arises an argument: whether it is better to be loved than feared. I reply that one should like to be both one and the other; but since it is difficult to join them together, it is much safer to be feared than to be loved when one of the two must be lacking.

Essentially, Machiavelli advocates letting your people have their property and women, but making sure that they know what you are capable of doing if they step out of line.

***Slaughterhouse-Five* by Kurt Vonnegut**

Through the beloved Billy Pilgrim, we see the central themes of Vonnegut's humanism along with his satirical take on how disgusting it is when humans don't use their (limited) free will to prevent simple atrocities. A great example of how we use humor to deal with hardship, and the conflict between the way heroism is conveyed through stories for actions in situations that perhaps could have been avoided altogether.

"So then I understood. It was war that made her so angry. She didn't want her babies or anybody else's babies killed in wars. And she thought wars were partly encouraged by books and movies."

***1984* by George Orwell**

If you are already worried about the information that your computer is collecting from you, re-read this one and you will feel much better! Or, perhaps, you will throw your computer in a river. This is the classic text for the will of the individual to maintain his privacy and free will, and how easy it is at the end of it all to just try to blend in and go with the flow to avoid making things even worse by speaking out.

"But it was all right, everything was all right, the struggle was finished. He had won the victory over himself. He loved Big Brother."

***The Republic* by Plato**

Since every man can use a fair portion of philosophy in his literary diet, the origin of legitimate western thought might be a good place to start. Plato's most well known work breaks down topics of which you should have a fundamental understanding such as government, justice, and political theory.

***Brothers Karamazov* by Fyodor Dostoevsky**

The final work of Dostoevsky (commonly accepted English spelling of the name) has a lot of meat to chew on...it strikes at the core of who we are and what drives us. Ultimately, for all of our strength and wisdom as individuals, we are often frustrated by our failures to do what we know we must do (or at least think we should do) and need the power of forgiveness in our lives. Many important thinkers consider this to be one of (if not *the* most) important masterpiece of literature, including Sigmund Freud and Franz Kafka (who did not think quite alike, to say the least).

"So long as man remains free he strives for nothing so incessantly and so painfully as to find some one to worship."

***The Catcher in the Rye* by J.D. Salinger**

Holden Caulfield, if nothing else, should serve as a point of reference for the angst and cynicism that you perhaps once had, or ideally never had. If you thought like him when you were 16 or 17 years old, you are forgiven. If you still identify with him, you need to find some more joy, somehow...fake it 'til you make it. Do something.

***The Wealth of Nations* by Adam Smith**

The fundamental work on free market policies: "It is not from the benevolence of the butcher, the brewer or the baker, that we expect our dinner, but from their regard to their own self interest. We address ourselves, not to their humanity but to their self-love, and never talk to them of our own necessities but of their advantages." Want

an education in economics? This book is a great start. (Pictured is the copy that belonged to John Adams).

***For Whom the Bell Tolls* by Ernest Hemingway**

Set in the Spanish Civil War, this novel explores who man becomes when faced with the prospect of his own death. It is worthwhile for all of us to consider what we would give our lives for, as this defines what and who we truly love. This is one of the great examples of how war has shaped men, past and present, and has in part defined the image of a true hero who is courageous even when it has brutal consequences.

"You learned the dry-mouthed, fear-purged purging ecstasy of battle and you fought that summer and that fall for all the poor in the world against all tyranny, for all the things you believed in and for the new world you had been educated into."

***The Picture of Dorian Gray* by Oscar Wilde**

Arguably the best work from the ever-quotable Wilde, this novel is a guide for how to live a life of pure decadence. Packed with impeccable wit, clever one-liners and an excessive amount of egotistical vanity. At the very least, this book will show you the glory and the pitfalls of being the best looking chap around.

***The Grapes of Wrath* by John Steinbeck**

One of the most controversial books of its time, the Joads are "Okies" who head west to the fertile valleys of California during the Dust Bowl era of the 1930s. Because of the social solutions that the book proposed, and its depiction of work camp conditions, some groups attacked the novel as communist propaganda. However, it was widely read as a result of the national attention, and is a classic example of a man doing what he had to do for his family and persevering through all plights and conditions.

"Fear the time when the strikes stop while the great owners live - for every little beaten strike is proof that the step is being taken...fear the time when Manself will not suffer and die for a concept, for this one quality is the foundation of Manself, and this one quality is man, distinctive in the universe."

***Brave New World* by Aldous Huxley**

With a revolutionary and controversial view of the future, Huxley's satiric take on the "utopia" of tomorrow has provoked reader's thoughts for decades. Depictions of genetically enhanced embryos predisposed to a specific social class cast warning signs for technological interference with human life.

***How To Win Friends And Influence People* by Dale Carnegie**

This is not a Dr. Phil self-help book. Citing intimate examples from the likes of Rockefeller, Charles Schwab and FDR, this comprehensive guide is all about how to get ahead in business, relationships and life. Read one chapter a day for the rest of your life. It will make you a far better man than you would ever be without it.

***Call of the Wild* by Jack London**

The tale of a domesticated dog forced to adapt to a life of work in Alaska during the Yukon gold rush. Most of us can recall rooting for Buck in the ferocious battle to be the leader of the pack. Make sure that you embrace the benefits of competition to push yourself to become better in your work, but do it without biting and/or killing co-workers.

"...men, groping in the Arctic darkness, had found a yellow metal...These men wanted dogs, and the dogs they wanted were heavy dogs, with strong muscles by which to toil, and furry coats to protect them from the frost."

***The Rise of Theodore Roosevelt* by Edmund Morris**

The Rise of Theodore Roosevelt shows what made Theodore Roosevelt the great man he was. Reading this book will inspire you to get off the couch and start moving in your life. Harvard graduate, New York Assemblyman, rancher, historian, author of several books, New York City Police Commissioner, Assistant Secretary of the Navy, Governor of New York, and commanding officer of the Rough Riders are all titles that TR had before he became president at 42.

***Swiss Family Robinson* by Johann David Wyss**

Every boy can stand to learn a bit of old fashioned resourcefulness from their pops. Finding yourself on a deserted island is surely the way to learn these skills in a hurry. Tree forts, treasure hunting, and constant adventure mark the Swiss Family's 10 year run. Lesson number one? Shipwrecks make for some good literature.

***Dharma Bums* by Jack Kerouac**

An idealistic vision from the man who fueled the Beat Generation, a life on the road without concern for wealth or even stability, rather an enjoyment of surroundings, whatever they may be. This is a great book for reminding us to get away from technology, at least for a day, to appreciate nature and some of the more simple pleasures of

life. Don't feel inferior to the beatniks if you still like driving your car...don't ever let hipsters give you guilt trips.

"I felt like lying down by the side of the trail and remembering it all. The woods do that to you, they always look familiar, long lost, like the face of a long-dead relative, like an old dream..."

The Iliad and Odyssey of Homer

(2 for 1 special) Though the authorship is disputed, the place of these two epics in the man canon is not. Roughly based around the events of the Trojan War, these poems are likely a great collection of common Greek folklore surrounding the events in those days of fierce political turmoil. It is rumored that there were 10 epics in all, and 8 were lost over time. This may be a blessing in disguise, because, if they were around, you would never get to the rest of this list.

Catch-22 by Joseph Heller

The logic here is simple: any book which has the influence to have coined terminology commonly used in our society for decades on end should be perused based solely on principle. Nothing is worse than a man being caught using language of which he is unfamiliar with its proper meaning or origin. Also, it is a great book.

Walden by Henry David Thoreau

A bit of isolation never hurt any man. Thoreau spent two years, two months and two days writing this book in Walden, a cabin tucked deep in the woods near Concord, Massachusetts. This work of non-fiction describes the changing of the seasons over the course of a year and was intended to give the author an escape from society in order to achieve a more objective point of view. A real man would take this sabbatical himself, but the book should suffice for those of you who are employed.

Lord of the Flies by William Golding

Primal instincts. With only the most basic of needs to consider, human nature takes a different approach. A fictional study of the struggle for power and the unspeakable things that man (or child) will do when taken outside the order of civilization.

The Master and Margarita by Mikhail Bulgakov

There is nothing more manly than a bout with the Devil. An entertaining commentary on the atheistic social bureaucracy in Moscow in the 1930's wherein Lucifer himself pays the town a visit to make light of their skepticism regarding the spiritual realm.

"As a result he decided to abandon the main thoroughfares and make his way through the side streets and back alleys where people were less nosy, and there was less chance that a barefoot man would be pestered about long johns that stubbornly refused to look like trousers."

Bluebeard by Kurt Vonnegut

Written as the autobiography of Rabo Karabekian, of course with Vonnegut's own war experiences drawn upon as inspiration to the aging artist who narrates his own story. It is a hilarious take on abstract art, and takes jabs at both the inflated self-importance of the artist and the people who simply refuse to look beneath the surface.

"My soul knows my meat is doing bad things, and is embarrassed. But my meat just keeps right on doing bad, dumb things."

Atlas Shrugged by Ayn Rand

Exploring the "virtue" of living for ourselves, this monster of a book (1,084 pages in my version) is certainly worth plowing through as it is simply a great story. The fundamental concept is that our world falls apart when individuals stop seeking their own satisfaction through personal achievement and feel a sense of entitlement to the accomplishments and work of others. This book challenges us on many levels...you may find it conflicting with your value of other people, her treatment of God, or any other beliefs you already hold. Yet, who can argue with "The most depraved type of human being ... (is) the man without a purpose."

The Metamorphosis by Franz Kafka

As Gregor Samsa awoke one morning from uneasy dreams he found himself transformed in his bed into a monstrous vermin.

None of us want this to happen. Well, most of us don't. Kafka employed terms from law and politics, and was always concerned about some vague, oppressive bureaucracy that sought his ruin, though seeming cool and detached. We can take something from the very approach of Kafka to his work and find a balance between reading too much meaning into an event and, on the contrary, caring too little and being completely disillusioned.

***Another Roadside Attraction* by Tom Robbins**

Just like *The DaVinci Code*, but on hallucinogenic mushrooms...and written 30 years prior. A psychedelic story of a wandering musical troupe that settle down to open "Captain Kendrick's Memorial Hot Dog Wildlife Preserve," and somehow get mixed up with the Vatican. The motto:

"The principal difference between an adventurer and a suicide is that the adventurer leaves himself a margin of escape (the narrower the margin, the greater the adventure)."

***White Noise* by Don DeLillo**

This National Book Award winner was more right on in 1985 than DeLillo could have possibly known. The drug Dylar is the supposed answer to man's fear of death, yet causes users to lose their minds. This is an extremely enjoyable read, particularly relevant and funny in its examination of how people act in a climate of fear (hello Homeland Security) and under a "hail of bullets" from advertisers and imaginary enemies alike. The lesson: secretly hold out for the wonder drug and/or fountain of youth, but live each day like it might be your last...in a good way...and still show up to work unless you really, really know it is your last day on earth.

***Ulysses* by James Joyce**

Just buy it and put it on your bookshelf and remember this from the book: "A man of genius makes no mistakes. His errors are volitional and are the portals of discovery." We suspect that even those who have written their doctoral thesis on the book only pretend to have read every word, but a good friend of mine said not to question an academic on things of this nature, so if you encounter someone who has built a career around Joyce, don't ask if they actually read it.

***The Young Man's Guide* by William Alcott**

The Young Man's Guide is a thorough resource which deals with the formation of character in a young man with regard to the mind, manners, and morals. It also has a good amount of insight on the topics of marriage and business. A strong foundational book for a young man asking the practical questions of how to live life while minimizing both terrible temporal mistakes and, well...the wrath of God. As is stated in the introduction, it is Alcott's intention to influence young men such that they contradict the stereotypes of thoughtlessness, rashness and an unwillingness to be advised or taught. Alcott was prescient in writing this book and would probably roll over in his grave if he saw the modern race of man-babies that play X-Box for 20 hours each week and are perpetually bartending their way through junior college.

***Blood Meridian, or the Evening Redness in the West* by Cormac McCarthy**

This Western novel written in 1985 is not only considered to be McCarthy's personal masterpiece, but also one of the greatest books of the 20th century. As the title suggests, the story is marked by extreme violence and contains many religious references. Isn't that what the history of man is all about?

***Seek: Reports from the Edges of America & Beyond* by Denis Johnson**

Through a collection of short stories that take you from a Bikers for Jesus convention to the 13 year olds with semi-automatic machine guns in Liberia, Johnson uses rich prose to examine the role of a man as a potted plant, observing his surroundings and soaking it up. In this story, horrific violence in seeming other worlds contrasts with the comparatively safe process of self-discovery in different U.S. subcultures. This will absolutely open your eyes to the simultaneous beauty and horror of our world, and remarkably, he does it without sounding condescending, jaded and bitter...he is just there, and you will absolutely see everything that he sees.

"In the Ogaden, life comes hard, but these have won through yet another day, unlike all the others they've lost to sickness, famine, massacres, battles. The villagers sit close together, everyone touching someone else, steeped in a contentment that seems, at this moment, perpetual. It occurs to the writer that the secret way to happiness is in knowing a lot of dead people."

***Crime And Punishment* by Fyodor Dostoevsky**

One of the most amazing aspects of this masterpiece is that it was written by Dostoevsky as part of his resolve to deal with some serious financial hardships. The lesson isn't to quit your job and write that novel you've been meaning to write...but many of us can relate to that sense of personal ambition and pride in the face of fear and financial stress. Again, take the moral lessons from the characters' mistakes, don't model your life after them.

"'Oh God, how loathsome it all is! and can I, can I possibly....No, it's nonsense, it's rubbish!' he added resolutely. 'And how could such an atrocious thing come into my head? What filthy things my heart is capable of.'"

...Ah, the classic moral dilemma arising from something as simple as a justified murder.

***Steppenwolf* by Herman Hesse**

The mysterious drifter is always an intriguing protagonist. One of Hesse's best known works, *Steppenwolf* gained much popularity through the Beat and hippy generations of the 50's and 60's which related to his common theme of search for spirituality outside the boundaries of society.

The Book of Deeds of Arms and of Chivalry by Christine De Pizan

An example of what we can learn about being better men from the perspective of a woman (de Pizan pictured above, instructing her son). She wrote this classic in the 15th Century, a time period not known as the peak of gender equality. Of course, we can project this into our work and not use the text as the foundation to build a neighborhood militia group.

"No one is afraid to do what he is confident of having learned well. A small force which is highly trained in the conflicts of war is more apt to victory: a raw and untrained horde is always exposed to slaughter."

The Art of Warfare by Sun Tzu

Written in the 6th Century, this has been one of the most influential texts in strategy and planning, especially emphasizing an ability to adapt to changing circumstances and environments rather than having a rigid plan and staying the course through to disaster.

"So it is said that if you know your enemies and know yourself, you will fight without danger in battles. If you only know yourself, but not your opponent, you may win or may lose. If you know neither yourself nor your enemy, you will always endanger yourself."

Don Quixote by Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra

Considered by many to be the greatest work of fiction, it is a goldmine of quotes surrounding a central theme that could be summed up by "all that glitters is not gold." This is also a great reminder that it is great to be a dreamer and a visionary, but remember to keep (at least somewhat) grounded in reality.

"I would do what I pleased, and doing what I pleased, I should have my will, and having my will, I should be contented; and when one is contented, there is no more to be desired; and when there is no more to be desired, there is an end of it."

Into the Wild by Jon Krakauer

This one is tough, because you want it but you don't...but a wise friend once said, upon being flattered for his world travels "yeah, well you go to all these places always knowing that one day you will come back to somewhere." We all have friends who are, or some of us may be personally, drifters, soaking up each place like a sponge, and then leaving for the next whistlestop. It is the classic battle between stability/same vs. mobility/change. In the end, the self-centered opting out of human interaction might not be quite as romantic as you hoped. All good things in proportion dear friends. His realization ("Happiness Only Real When Shared") is the great counter-balance to that primitive urge to walk alone into the wild. Or at least think about the fact that snow melts, and rivers get higher.

The Divine Comedy by Dante Alighieri

This epic vision of afterlife is valuable because it challenges us to examine the roots of what we believe and why, and the role of faith in our lives. Further, it is a vision of a world (or worlds) beyond our every day concerns, which is particularly fascinating because it was very much influenced by both Muslim and Catholic thoughts, beliefs and history.

The Hobbit by JRR Tolkien

The precursor to the *Lord of the Rings* trilogy, this is a good one to read (or re-read) in advance of the 2010 release of the movie adaptation which is being directed by Guillermo del Toro (*Pan's Labyrinth*). This is the foundation of it all, and this passage demonstrates the effect on all men (and dwarves) when faced with the prospect of power.

"Their mere fleeting glimpses of treasure which they had caught as they went along had rekindled all the fire of their dwarfish hearts; and when the heart of a dwarf, even the most respectable, is wakened by gold and by jewels, he grows suddenly bold, and he may become fierce."

The Rough Riders by Theodore Roosevelt

Roosevelt's own account of his experience commanding the Rough Riders in the Spanish-American War. A great war history from a man who lived it himself. From his account, a man can learn what it means to be a true leader. TR set the example for his men and they followed because they simply respected him.

East of Eden by John Steinbeck

Considered by Steinbeck himself to be the work that he had been preparing for throughout his entire life. If you

have had the chance to read this, or if anyone has ever talked about this book to you...perhaps you have been graced to read or even hear an excerpt from the legendary opening to Chapter 13:

Sometimes a kind of glory lights up the mind of a man. It happens to nearly everyone. You can feel it growing or preparing like a fuse burning toward dynamite[...]Then a man pours outward, a torrent of him, and yet he is not diminished. And I guess a man's importance in the world can be measured by the quality and number of his glories. It is a lonely thing but it relates us to the world. It is the mother of all creativeness, and it sets each man separate from all other men.

***Leviathan* by Thomas Hobbes**

Written during the English Civil War, Hobbes' work is one of the foremost authorities in political theory and contributed greatly to Enlightenment philosophy. *Leviathan's* primary concern is the centralized power of the sovereign state existing to maintain order and peace both within and without. A valuable resource, as a man never knows when he is going to be commissioned with the task of forming a new government.

"In the first place, I put for a general inclination of all mankind, a perpetual and restless desire of power after power, that ceaseth only in death."

***The Thin Red Line* by James Jones**

The author's fictional depiction of the Guadalcanal Campaign during WW2. Portraying various wartime activities most would consider repulsive, Jones gives account without judgment. With the current events of Abu Ghraib and Guantanamo Bay, this work is very relevant today.

***Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* by Mark Twain**

A satirical depiction of the social climate in the South just before the turn of the century, "*Huck Finn*" is largely considered to be the first Great American Novel. Twain's take on the issue of racism and slavery was initially criticized upon publication and remains largely controversial to this day.

***The Politics* by Aristotle**

From the man that gave pointers to Alexander the Great we can all take note. His writings created the first comprehensive system of philosophy, including morality and aesthetics, logic and science, politics and metaphysics. Though it is thought that much of Aristotle's work has been lost over the years, it is not a bad idea to take in the surviving words from one of the founding figures of Western Philosophy.

"Now if some men excelled others in the same degree in which gods and heroes are supposed to excel mankind in general... so that the superiority of the governors was undisputed and patent to their subjects, it would clearly be better that once for all the one class should rule and the others serve. But since this is unattainable, and kings have no marked superiority over their subjects... it is obviously necessary on many grounds that all the citizens alike should take their turn of governing and being governed."

First Edition of the *The Boy Scout Handbook*

This is the book that started the Boy Scout movement. If you're a former Boy Scout, you'll be amazed at the amount of useful information the first edition manual has compared to Scout manuals today. In addition to teaching essential scouting skills, the first edition of the *Boy Scout Handbook* also includes stories of adventure and bravery that will excite and inspire any man.

***Cyrano de Bergerac* by Edmond Rostand**

A poet, musician and expert swordsman. That is a true Renaissance Man. Unfortunately, Cyrano had a tragically large nose which affected his confidence enough to keep him from professing his love for the fair Roxanne, even on his deathbed. I wasn't exaggerating when I used the word "tragic." Also, one must respect the play responsible for introducing the word "panache" to the English language.

***Tropic of Cancer* by Henry Miller**

For its honest and graphic depiction of sex, this book was deemed "pornographic" by state courts upon its New York publishing in 1961. This ruling, however, was later overturned by the U.S. Supreme Court and the book became very influential in the sexual revolution of the 60's and 70's.

***The Crisis* by Winston Churchill**

A fictional Civil War era romance between a New England lawyer and a southern belle, written by the "American Churchill" but often mistaken for the British Prime Minister who shared the same name. Out of respect for the American's work, the British Churchill offered to add his middle initial to any of his own published writings to avoid confusion.

***The Naked and The Dead* by Norman Mailer**

Taking place in World War II, this is widely considered to be one of the best war novels ever written. As a young man, Mailer showed extraordinary insight into power relationships between the soldiers and their superiors. Further, the soldiers also deal with various degrees of compassion while fighting to maintain a belief in the capacity of humanity to be good while engaging in the brutality of war and being forced to follow orders against their ideals in some cases. A prime example of his superb insight into the workings of many systems and organizational structures, which is still relevant in today's wars and corporations alike:

"To make an Army work you have to have every man in it fitted into a fear ladder... The Army functions best when you're frightened of the man above you, and contemptuous of your subordinates."

***Hatchet* by Gary Paulsen**

A classic from our youth, the main character (Brian) deals with his parents' strained relationship by fleeing into the wilderness for a sort of accidental, self-inflicted rite of passage. Perhaps the greatest pearl of wisdom comes early in the book, foreshadowing his quest for survival:

"All flying is easy. Just takes learning. Like everything else. Like everything else."

***Animal Farm* by George Orwell**

An advanced politics lesson under the guise of a childish farm tale. The allegorical story representing Soviet totalitarianism simplifies social systems to show the endless corruption and manipulation that stems from the struggle for power. Also, it takes no small amount of courage to take jabs at Mr. Stalin himself.

***Tarzan of the Apes* by Edgar Rice Burroughs**

Gentleman? No. Man? Most certainly. Having been raised by apes gives our protagonist more than a leg up on the competition when it comes to survival skills. He was a pretty big hit with the ladies as well. Originally published in the All-Story Magazine in 1912, *Tarzan of the Apes* led to 23 sequels and many more depictions of the famous character in various other forms of media.

***Beyond Good and Evil* by Friedrich Nietzsche**

With his denunciation of philosophers before him as lacking critical thought and mindlessly adhering to Christian tenets, Nietzsche took philosophy beyond religion, thus founding the Existentialist Movement. Questioning even the most basic of truths, Nietzsche writes that "from every point of view the erroneousness of the world in which we believe we live is the surest and firmest thing we can get our eyes on." Staging a complete overhaul of the philosophical landscape is beyond ambitious and worthy of your attention. No matter what your beliefs, it is good to examine why you believe what you believe without fear of what you might discover.

***The Federalist Papers* by Alexander Hamilton, John Jay, and James Madison**

Composed of 85 articles, *The Federalist Papers* served to explain and encourage ratification of the U.S. Constitution. The majority of the essays were penned by Hamilton and published in *The Independent Journal* and *The New York Packet*. It is rumored that Hamilton used up most of his wisdom in the writing process, as he later lost his life in a duel, which is essentially two men in close proximity firing bullets at each other without trying to get out of the way.

***Moby Dick* by Herman Melville**

If you ever find yourself on a boat in search of a savage beast, and you encounter a boat that is looking for some of their missing friends that seem to have been attacked by that same whale that you are looking for, take a minute and think. Cost: Possibly your life. Benefit: You kill a big whale. AND you get some serious props.

By this, he seemed to mean, not only that the most reliable and useful courage was that which arises from the fair estimation of the encountered peril, but that an utterly fearless man is a far more dangerous comrade than a coward.

***Essential Manners for Men* by Peter Post**

Lay to rest all situational conundrums you encounter in daily life. From hosting guests to appropriate behavior at social events, Post's pointers enable a gentleman to deal with any difficult scenario with confidence and poise.

***Frankenstein* by Mary Wollstonecraft Shelly**

Before you get too excited about having your clone or some other cyborg cleaning your house and picking up the dry cleaning...just remember that the cost of the convenience might be the life of your brother, your wife, your friend, and eventually when you track the rogue creature down, you will come really close to revenge but just get sick and die. And to top it off, somehow people will dress up as the beast and also feel sympathy towards him, because it wasn't even his fault that he was created. He just wanted to be loved by his creator, and when he

didn't get it, he went crazy. Just have kids and tell them to clean your house, and love them so that they don't act like the monster.

Hamlet by Shakespeare

The longest of Shakespeare's plays, it is a tragedy that has been remade repeatedly, and with good reason as it explores the depths of man's desire for revenge. 400 years after it was written, it is still powerful enough to make us root for Hamlet to avenge his father's death, even as some superior morality might call for mercy.

"There's a divinity that shapes our ends,
Rough-hew them how we will."

The Boys of Summer by Roger Kahn

What is a man's library without some literature on America's favorite past time? Dubbed "The finest American book on sports," *The Boys of Summer* is an account of the Brooklyn Dodgers leading up to their 1955 World Series victory. Kahn's depiction of some of the game's greatest legends like Gil Hodges and Duke Snyder is so inspiring to make a man desire another shot on the diamond.

A Separate Peace by John Knowles

A classic coming-of-age story about two boys, set around the time of the Second World War. Dealing with one of the boy's jealousy of another, and the tragic accident resulting from it, the novel mourns and reflects on the specific moment when all innocence is lost. After all, a boy cannot go on thinking life is about ice cream and tree forts forever.

A Farewell To Arms by Ernest Hemingway

Written from the perspective of Lieutenant "Tenente" Frederic Henry it is a novel of epic manly proportions. As an American ambulance driver with the Italian army in WWI, Henry is injured by a mortar and while in the infirmary falls in love with his British nurse, Catherine Barkley. After healing and having impregnated nurse Barkley, Henry returns to his unit, only to narrowly escape fratricide. Henry goes AWOL and he and his bird flee to neutral Switzerland where they live a peaceful existence until Barkley dies during childbirth. In typical Hemingway fashion, he mourns her death by simply walking back to his hotel in the rain.

The Stranger by Albert Camus

Perhaps the most popular piece of 20th century "existential" literature. *The Stranger* addresses murder and remorse (or lack thereof), God and atheism, destiny and justice, and consequently, indifference. Camus' anti-hero, Meursault is perhaps the ultimate man-unable to cry at his own funeral, and one of the final lines of the novel reads, "... I had only to wish that there be a large crowd of spectators the day of my execution and that they greet me with cries of hate". Camus gets a special nod for his manliness for being an active member in the French Resistance during WWII. And you probably thought no Frenchmen would be on this list.

Robinson Crusoe by Daniel Defoe

Robinson Crusoe deals with mastery and morality. It addresses the ability of mankind to master his surroundings through hard work, and patience and faith, which eventually enable him to survive on an unknown island and able to cope with the difficult terrain, less-than-friendly natives and basically every wicked trial that comes his way. The morality addressed in this book is the eponymous protagonist's rejection of his father's advice to accept the happiness of the middle class life from which he was born. Against the wishes of his family, he runs off to sea to find adventure. It is not until Crusoe literally recreates a primitive approximation of that middle class life for himself on his island that he is freed.

The Pearl by John Steinbeck

A story about the ill-fate of a poor pearl diver, Kino and his wife and infant. *The Pearl* starts with Kino's son Coyotito having been stung by a scorpion, and being as though they are so poor, Kino has to dive to find a pearl to sell in-order to pay for his son's medical attention. After finding the largest Pearl known to his region, word spreads and everyone is after his score. Eventually his son recovers naturally and the fate of the Pearl consumes the entire region, including Kino. Kino does all he can to protect his beloved family while fleeing north to sell the pearl for a better life for them. Eventually, a bounty hunter's stray bullet kills his son, and upon realizing the misfortune this great treasure brought him Kino hurls it back into the sea. A melancholy ending yes, an endorsement of socialism perhaps...but as a reflection of what a man will do for his family, it is pretty spot-on.

On the Road by Jack Kerouac

The stream of consciousness drifting (see the 120 foot long manuscript scroll above) has helped us experience that sacred institution of just *going*, and using our own language to experience the rapid unfolding of a new town as a rich flash in a pan. Lucky for all of us, he has saved us the trouble of popping Benzedrine for 3 weeks and experiencing our own mad visions, and we can simply join his world without ferociously grinding our teeth

(though Kerouac said it was made possible by coffee alone). If you haven't read it, get it now please. If you have, you know that you will never complain about a long drive again, whether alone or with the boys.

***Treasure Island* by Robert Louis Stevenson**

Aside from the frilly shirts, I don't think there was anything more masculine than pirates up until Tom Selleck's birth. Stevenson's creation of *Treasure Island* has forever changed our view of the pirate world. His secret maps marked with an 'X' and hidden gold have enchanted readers for over a century.

"Here it is about gentlemen of fortune. They lives rough, and they risk swinging, but they eat and drink like fighting-cocks, and when a cruise is done, why, it's hundreds of pounds instead of hundreds of farthings in their pockets."

***Confederacy of Dunces* - John Kennedy Toole**

First published in 1980, 11 years after the author's suicide, this New Orleans based novel went on to win Toole the Pulitzer Prize in Fiction. A perfect comedy of errors centered around the character of Ignatius J. Reilly, a lazy and socially ignorant, but intelligent man who still lives with his mother at the age of 30. This book serves as a guide for what a man ought not to be, while providing sound entertainment all the while.

***Foucault's Pendulum* - Umberto Eco**

Italian novelist and philosopher Umberto Eco first published this work in 1988, which tells the story of three friends who create their own historical conspiracy to entertain themselves. "The Plan" becomes more intelligent and complex, and they begin to make believers of others, and even themselves. As they become wrapped up in a series of events beyond their control, the book displays the inherent credulity of man. Getting lost in a "Choose Your Own Adventure" that becomes a reality is every grown boy's dream.

***The Great Railway Bazaar* by Paul Theroux**

In this unique odyssey, Theroux recounts his journey through Europe, the Middle East, India and Southeast Asia on the continent's fabled trains — the Orient Express, the Golden Arrow to Kuala Lumpur, the Mandalay Express and the Trans-Siberian Express. His well-documented and entertaining adventures have come to be considered a classic in the travel literature genre. This journal satisfies the vicarious traveler and inspires the adventurous man.

***Fear and Trembling* by Soren Kierkegaard**

In this book Kierkegaard creates a case study from the famous bible story (Genesis 22) from when Abraham is famously commanded by God to sacrifice his son Isaac. Kierkegaard uses the story as an opportunity to question the philosophy of religion, the relationship between philosophy and religion, the nature of God and faith, faith's relationship with ethics and morality, and the difficulty of being authentically religious. It is manly to ask questions about the bigger things - there is more to life than sports.

***Undaunted Courage* by Stephen Ambrose**

Undaunted Courage is a compelling account of the Lewis and Clark expedition through the Louisiana Territory. The book is thoroughly researched and extremely well written. The bravery and courage of the explorers should inspire any man.

***Paradise Lost* by John Milton**

John Milton's *Paradise Lost* is a timeless hard-to-read classic. Its imagery has shaped how the Western world views Christianity, sin, the fall, life, death, heaven, and hell. Unlike many of his predecessors, Milton concentrated on more humanist elements. Reading Milton might or might not change your view of God and man, but absorbing him will change your love of language. The words are vivid and powerful and beg to be read aloud.

***Cannery Row* by John Steinbeck**

A man, no matter his class or situation, needs a healthy appreciation for the simple folk. The working class; the laborers compose the backbone of society. Steinbeck's *Cannery Row* depicts a cross-section of this community, located on a strip of sardine canneries, in the late Depression era. This area has a life of its own, and is as much a character of the book as any of the community members themselves. The novel not only paints a picture of a difficult time that has passed, but gives honest insight into the human condition that is timeless.

"Because he loved true things he tried to explain"

American Boys' Handy Book

Written in 1890, the *American Boys Handy Book* is filled with different activities a boy can do during each season. Activities include kite making, how to make to make blow guns, and bird watching. This book is an excellent

resource for dads who want to provide their sons entertainment that doesn't involve video games.

***Into Thin Air* by Jon Krakauer**

This book details the author's fateful ascent up Mt. Everest in which eight other climbers were killed in a storm. Perhaps the most inspiring story is that of one climber who was left for dead, but awakened 12 hours after being abandoned and hiked back to camp in sub-zero weather. This man is an example to all men that when the will of survival is strong enough, a man can overcome any obstacle.

***King Solomon's Mines* by H. Rider Haggard**

The author wrote *King Solomon's Mines* specifically for boys. The story follows English explorers who penetrate the deepest part of Africa to find the treasure of King Solomon. A great book to read with your son at bedtime. You'll both be entertained and instill in your son a sense of manly adventure.

***The Idiot* by Fyodor Dostoevsky**

Our protagonist here, Myshkin, is an example of a selfless love, moving to marry a woman to save her from falling into the arms of Rogozhin, who represents darkness. Remind any of you good ol' boys of that girl in high school who kept running back to the man who didn't deserve her affections? Well, in this case, the girl runs back to Rogozhin, who, in spite of and perhaps because of his deep passion, rewarded her by...killing her. Myshkin is considered the "idiot" because of his innocence and trust in the best of humanity as it could be, and in the end, his optimism and love for humanity are his undoing in the face of a dark, materialistic society. The lesson: don't marry a woman to save her from another man...although, come to think of the end of Super Mario Bros...

***A River Runs Through It* by Norman F. Maclean**

You've seen the movie, now read the book that inspired it. This book is an American classic. *A River Runs Through It* follows an older brother's attempt to save his talented brother from self destruction in one last fly fishing trip. Set in Montana's beautiful Blackfoot River country, the author fills the story with vivid descriptions of fishing and nature that engages the reader to ponder important life questions. From the story we learn that sometimes the people we love the most are the hardest to help.

"So it is...that we can seldom help anybody. Either we don't know what part to give or maybe we don't like to give any part of ourselves. Then, more often than not, the part that is needed is not wanted. And even more often, we do not have the part that is needed."

***The Island of Dr. Moreau* by H.G. Wells**

The haphazard discovery of scientifically engineered half human-half animals on a remote island is an experience that has the potential to put some hair on your chest. Living with the "Beast Folk" for a year then returning to life as normal in London proves to be exceedingly more difficult for the protagonist.

Malcolm X: The Autobiography

Malcolm X is quite possibly one of the most controversial public figures from the Civil Rights Movement. His autobiography shows what a complex individual Malcolm X was. We see his transformation from ignorance and despair to knowledge and spiritual awakening. His emphasis on the principal of self-reliance and taking a stand for your rights resonates with every man.

Nobody can give you freedom. Nobody can give you equality or justice or anything. If you're a man, you take it.

***Theodore Rex* by Edmund Morris**

Theodore Rex is a biography of Teddy Roosevelt that covers his eight years as President. From this book we learn what a man can do if they have unwavering determination. During his eight years as President of the United States, Roosevelt created the national parks system, saw the completion of the Panama Canal, and went after unethical trusts and monopolies. TR created the modern presidency. If only we had more leaders like him.

***The Count of Monte Cristo* by Alexandre Dumas**

The ultimate tale of betrayal and revenge, and perhaps one of the best stories of all time. Edmund Dantes, who shortly after being promoted to captain of his ship, and just days before his marriage to his beloved fiance Mercedes, is brutally betrayed by those he trusts, arrested for treason and consequently taken to a prison on an island off the French coast. The story goes on to tell of his life after escape from prison, his finding the greatest treasure in all the world, and re-entering the society as a wealthy, educated and sophisticated Count. He plots his revenge, which he ultimately denies himself when forced to decide between it and his love for his Mercedes. Through this choice his justice is ultimately served. It is a great novel that you most likely won't be able to put down until you have it finished, even if you have already seen the movie.

***All Quiet on The Western Front* by Erich Maria Remarque**

A classic war novel that depicts how war can destroy a man. The book begins with young, idealistic German men, going off to fight in WWI believing their cause is just. After experiencing the horrors of trench warfare and shell shock these young men leave the war disillusioned and numb.

"I am young, I am twenty years old; yet I know nothing of life but despair, death, fear, and fatuous superficiality cast over an abyss of sorrow. I see how peoples are set against one another, and in silence, unknowingly, foolishly, obediently, innocently slay one another."

***The Red Badge of Courage* by Stephen Crane**

As boys, men often have romantic and idealized visions of war. The reality of war, though, is hard and brutal. In order to survive and thrive in war, a man must transform himself into something bigger. *The Red Badge of Courage* follows a teenager's enlistment into the Union Army during the Civil War. He enlists with dreams of glory, but soon those dreams are replaced with doubt and fear. In the end, the young protagonist digs deep and finds the courage and confidence he needs to be a successful soldier.

They gazed about them with looks of uplifted pride, feeling new trust in the grim, always confident weapons in their hands. And they were men.

***Lives of the Noble Greeks and Romans* by Plutarch**

If you wish to be a great man, you must learn from great men. One of the best ways to do that is through reading the biographies of great men. Plutarch's *Lives of the Noble Greeks and Romans* lets us into the lives of some of history's greatest men. From these writings we learn the importance that a man's character can have on influencing the world around him. His biography on Alexander the Great is especially inspiring.

***The Strenuous Life* by Theodore Roosevelt**

A Strenuous Life is a collection of speeches and essays by Roosevelt on the importance of building the character of men and women in order for the American Republic to succeed. From it we learn that eschewing the life of ease and luxury are necessary for a country to thrive.

The Bible

Despite being one of the most religious industrialized nations, America's religious literacy is horrible. If asked to name one of the Ten Commandments or one of Jesus' apostles, many Americans wouldn't be able to do it. The problem is half the books on these lists make Biblical references that must be known by the reader for them to understand the message of that book. If a Western man desires to understand the culture that surrounds him, he needs to have a thorough understanding of the Book that has shaped that culture.

In addition, the Bible is full of ancient counsel and advice that is applicable to today's man, whether you're a believer in God or not.

When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man I put away childish things. - I Corinthians 13:11

***Lonesome Dove* by Larry McMurtry**

Lonesome Dove is quite possibly the greatest Western novel ever written. The story follows two long-time friends on a cattle drive from the Rio Grande to Montana. Along the way they encounter outlaws, Indians, and old flames. Be warned. This book is a best, but reading it is definitely worth it. After you read the book, make sure to watch the mini-series.

***The Maltese Falcon* by Dashiell Hammett**

There's nothing more manly than a good hard-boiled detective novel. *The Maltese Falcon* is filled with ambiguities in morality. Sam Spade, the main character in the book is a hardened and cynical man. But underneath his rough exterior is a man with a sense of idealism. Is it possible to do good even if you're a bad person? It's a book that will entertain as well as make you think.

"When a man's partner is killed, he's supposed to do something about it. It doesn't make any difference what you thought of him. He was your partner and you're supposed to do something about it."

***The Long Goodbye* by Raymond Chandler**

The Long Goodbye is the last book in the Phillip Marlowe detective series. Like any good hard-boiled detective novel, this one is full of gangsters and beautiful femme fatales. In *The Long Goodbye*, Marlowe befriends a down-on-his-law-war veteran and helps him back on his feet. Little did Marlowe know that his relationship with this man would wind him up in trouble. This book makes for great weekend and bed time reading.

***To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee**

Atticus Finch embodies all the traits that a noble man should have. Atticus teaches us to fight for what's , even when everyone else around you thinks you're wrong. He teaches his children to never judge a man until you've walked in their shoes; that we should recognize that people have both good and bad qualities, but focus on the good more.

"Courage is not a man with a gun in his hand. It's knowing you're licked before you begin but you begin anyway and you see it through no matter what. You rarely win, but sometimes you do."

***The Dangerous Book for Boys* by Conn and Hal Iggulden**

This is a great book if you have a son. It's filled with activities and skills that all boys should know. Even if you don't have a son, you'll spend hours flipping through the pages reminiscing about summer days as a boy. You might also learn a few things, too. Subjects include the histories of famous battles and how to make a bow and arrow.

***The Killer Angels* by Michael Shaara**

The Battle of Gettysburg was the turning point in the Civil War. *The Killer Angles* recounts this great battle from the the men who played a key role in it. The author attempts to get in the minds of General Lee and Colonel Longstreet and decipher their thoughts and motivations leading up to the fateful battle. After reading this, you'll understand why many historians say the Civil War was the last romantic war ever fought.

The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin

It shouldn't be a surprise that Ben Franklin's Autobiography is on the list. The *Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin* is considered by many historians to be America's first self-help book. In edition to sharing his life's story, Franklin explains how a man can make himself a success. His story begins with Franklin as boy walking around barefoot and with rolls in his pocket and ends with him being a successful businessman, scientist, and statesman.

Having emerged from the poverty and obscurity in which I was born and bred, to a state of affluence and some degree of reputation in the world, and having gone so far through life with a considerable share of felicity, the conducing means I made use of, which with the blessing of God so well succeeded, my posterity may like to know, as they may find some of them suitable to their own situations, and therefore fit to be imitated.

***The Histories* by Herodotus**

If we don't learn from the past, we're doomed to repeat it. *The Histories* by Herodetus is considered the first work of history in Western literature. The Founding Fathers looked to Herodetus' histories to learn from the mistakes that the ancient Greeks made with democracy. From the histories we get the best description of the Battle of Marathon. Despite being thousands of years old, many of the problems that ancient Greeks faced, we still face today.

***From Here to Eternity* by James Jones**

This book isn't about war itself, but rather the it's about the life of a soldier in Hawaii before the bombing of Pearl Harbor. The main character, Private Robert E. Lee Prewitt is a non-conformist in a profession that demands conformity. His rebelliousness slowly destroys him as the story progresses. The book takes a look at the effect military subculture can have a on a man.

***The Frontier in American History* by Frederick Jackson Turner**

What makes American's American? According to Fredrick Jackson Turner, it was the existence of the frontier that shaped America. While Turner's thesis has been disputed, no one can deny the effect that the wide open frontier had on the American psyche. If you'd like to understand a part of what made the American man, read this essay.

***Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance* by Robert Pirsig**

Quite possibly the most widely read book on philosophy. The book is set as a cross-country motorcycle trip by a father and son. The book focuses on the importance of quality in a culture obsessed with quantity.

***Self Reliance* by Ralph Waldo Emerson**

Ralph Waldo Emerson is one of America's greatest philosophers. In his essay, *Self Reliance*, Emerson stressed the importance of individualism and the importance of living by your conscious. A man should not conform or live a life of false consistency.They should march to the beat of their own drummer.

It is easy in the world to live after the world's opinion; it is easy in solitude after own own; but the great man is he who in the midst of the crowd keeps with perfect sweetness the independence of solitude.