

# The Great Books of the Western World as selected by Mortimer Adler

1. Homer

*Iliad*  
*Odyssey*

2. Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, Aristophanes

Aeschylus. Plays  
Sophocles. Plays  
Euripides. Plays  
Aristophanes. Plays

3. Herodotus, Thucydides

Herodotus. *History*  
Thucydides. *The History of the Peloponnesian War*

4. Plato

*Dialogues*  
*Seventh Letter*

5. Aristotle (I)

Works

6. Aristotle (II)

Works (continued)

7. Hippocrates, Galen

Hippocrates. *Hippocratic Writings*  
Galen. *On the Natural Faculties*

8. Euclid, Archimedes, Nicomachus

Euclid. *Elements*  
Archimedes. Works (including *The Method*)  
Nicomachus. *Introduction to Arithmetic*

9. Lucretius, Epictetus, Marcus Aurelius, Plotinus

Lucretius *The Way Things Are*  
Epictetus. *Discourses*  
Marcus Aurelius. *The Meditations*  
Plotinus. *The Six Enneads*

10. Virgil

*Eclogues*  
*Georgics*  
*Aeneid*

11. Plutarch

*Lives of the Noble Grecians and Romans*

12. Tacitus

*Annals*  
*Histories*

13. Ptolemy, Copernicus, Kepler

Ptolemy. *Almagest*  
Copernicus. *On the Revolutions of the Heavenly Spheres*  
Kepler. *Epitome of Copernican Astronomy*  
Kepler. *The Harmonies of the World*

14. Augustine

*The Confessions*  
*The City of God*  
*On Christian Doctrine*

15. Thomas Aquinas (I)

*Summa Theologica*

16. Thomas Aquinas (II)

*Summa Theologica* (continued)

17. Dante, Chaucer

Dante. *Divine Comedy*

Chaucer. *Troilus and Criseyde*

Chaucer. *Canterbury Tales*

18. Calvin

*Institutes of the Christian Religion*

19. Machiavelli, Hobbes

Machiavelli. *The Prince*

Hobbes. *Leviathan, or, Matter, Form and Power of a Commonwealth Ecclesiastical and Civil*

20. Rabelais

*Gargantua and Pantagruel*

21. Erasmus, Montaigne

Erasmus. *Praise of Folly*

Montaigne. *Essays*

22. Shakespeare (I)

*The Plays and Sonnets*

23. Shakespeare (II)

*The Plays and Sonnets* (continued)

24. Gilbert, Galileo, Harvey

Gilbert. *On the Loadstone and Magnetic Bodies*

Galileo. *Concerning the Two New Sciences*

Harvey. *On the Motion of the Heart and Blood in Animals*

Harvey. *On the Circulation of the Blood*  
Harvey. *On the Generation of Animals*

25. Cervantes

*The History of Don Quixote de la Mancha*

26. Bacon, Descartes, Spinoza

Bacon. *Advancement of Learning*

Bacon. *Novum Organum*

Bacon. *New Atlantis*

Descartes. *Rules for the Direction of the Mind*

Descartes. *Discourse on the Method*

Descartes. *Meditations on First Philosophy*

Descartes. *Objections Against the Meditations and Replies*

Descartes. *The Geometry*

Spinoza. *Ethics*

27. Milton

English minor poems

*Paradise Lost*

*Samson Agonistes*

*Areopagitica*

28. Pascal

*The Provincial Letters*

*Pensees*

*Scientific Treatises*

29. Moliere, Racine

Moliere. *The School for Wives*

Moliere. *The Critique of the School for Wives*

Moliere. *Tartuffe*

Moliere. *Don Juan*

Moliere. *The Miser*

Moliere. *The Would-Be Gentleman*

Moliere. *The Would-Be Invalid*

Racine. *Berenice*

30. Newton, Huygens

Newton. *Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy*

Newton. *Optics*

Huygens. *Treatise on Light*

31. Locke, Berkeley

Locke. *A Letter Concerning Toleration*

Locke. *Concerning Civil Government, Second Essay*

Locke. *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*

Berkeley. *The Principles of Human Knowledge*

Hume. *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*

32. Swift, Voltaire, Diderot

Swift. *Gulliver's Travels*

Voltaire. *Candide*

Diderot. *Rameau's Nephew*

33. Montesquieu, Rousseau

Montesquieu. *The Spirit of Laws*

Rousseau. *On the Origin of Inequality*

Rousseau. *On Political Economy*

Rousseau. *The Social Contract*

34. Smith

*An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*

35. Gibbon (I)

*History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*

36. Gibbon (II)

*History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire (continued)*

37. Kant

*The Critique of Pure Reason*  
*The Critique of Practical Reason, and Other Ethical Treatises*  
*The Critique of Judgment*

38. American State Papers, The Federalist, Mill

*Declaration of Independence*  
*Articles of Confederation*  
*The Constitution*  
Hamilton, Madison, Jay. *The Federalist*  
Mill. *On Liberty*  
Mill. *Representative Government*  
Mill. *Utilitarianism*

39. Boswell

*Life of Samuel Johnson, LL. D.*

40. Lavoisier, Faraday

Lavoisier. *Elements of Chemistry*  
Faraday. *Experimental Researches in Electricity*

41. Hegel, Kierkegaard, Nietzsche

Hegel. *The Philosophy of Right*  
Hegel. *The Philosophy of History*  
Kierkegaard. *Fear and Trembling*  
Nietzsche. *Beyond Good and Evil*

42. Tocqueville

*Democracy in America*

43. Goethe, Balzac

Goethe. *Faust: Parts One and Two*  
Balzac. *Cousin Bette*

44. Austen, Eliot

Austen. *Emma*

Eliot. *Middlemarch*

45. Dickens

*Little Dorrit*

46. Melville, Twain

Melville. *Moby Dick, or, The Whale*

Twain. *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*

47. Darwin

*The Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection*

*The Descent of Man and Selection in Relation to Sex*

48. Marx, Engels

Marx (edited by Engels). *Capital*

Marx and Engels. *Manifesto of the Communist Party*

49. Tolstoy

*War and Peace*

50. Dostoyevsky, Ibsen

Dostoyevsky. *The Brothers Karamazov*

Ibsen. *A Doll's House*

Ibsen. *The Wild Duck*

Ibsen. *Hedda Gabler*

Ibsen. *The Master Builder*

51. James

*The Principles of Psychology*

52. Freud

*The Major Works of Sigmund Freud*

53. 20th Century Philosophy and Religion

James. *Pragmatism*  
Bergson. *An Introduction to Metaphysics*  
Dewey. *Experience and Education*  
Whitehead. *Science and the Modern World*  
Russell. *The Problems of Philosophy*  
Heidegger. *What is Metaphysics?*  
Wittgenstein. *Philosophical Investigations*  
Barth. *The Word of God and the Word of Man*

#### 54.20th Century Natural Science

Poincare. *Science and Hypothesis*  
Planck. *Scientific Autobiography and Other Papers*  
Whitehead. *An Introduction to Mathematics*  
Einstein. *Relativity: The Special and the General Theory*  
Eddington. *The Expanding Universe*  
Bohr. *Atomic Theory and the Description of Nature* (selections)  
Bohr. *Discussion with Einstein on Epistemological Problems in Atomic Physics*  
Hardy. *A Mathematician's Apology*  
Heisenberg. *Physics and Philosophy*  
Schrodinger. *What is Life?*  
Dobzhansky. *Genetics and the Origin of Species*  
Waddington. *The Nature of Life*

#### 55.20th Century Social Science (I)

Veblen. *The Theory of the Leisure Class*  
Tawney. *The Acquisitive Society*  
Keynes. *The General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money*

#### 56.20th Century Social Science (II)

Frazer. *The Golden Bough* (selections)  
Weber. *Essays in Sociology* (selections)  
Huizinga. *The Waning of the Middle Ages*  
Levi-Strauss. *Structural Anthropology* (selections)

#### 57.20th Century Imaginative Literature (I)

James. *The Beast in the Jungle*



Shaw. *Saint Joan*  
Conrad. *Heart of Darkness*  
Chekhov. *Uncle Vanya*  
Pirandello. *Six Characters in Search of an Author*  
Proust. *Remembrance of Things Past*. "Swann in Love"  
Cather. *A Lost Lady*  
Mann. *Death in Venice*  
Joyce. *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*

## 58.20th Century Imaginative Literature (II)

Woolf. *To the Lighthouse*  
Kafka. *Metamorphosis*  
Lawrence. *The Prussian Officer*  
Eliot. *The Waste Land*  
O'Neill. *Mourning Becomes Electra*  
Fitzgerald. *The Great Gatsby*  
Faulkner. *A Rose for Emily*  
Brecht. *Mother Courage and Her Children*  
Hemingway. *The Short Happy Life of Macomber*  
Orwell. *Animal Farm*  
Beckett. *Waiting for Godot*