

Top ten classics for a reading newbie

While the world is shaken to its core by the ongoing pandemic, we have little else to do than to brave through these difficult times in isolation. But pretty soon, this separation from society ends up fraying your emotions. To keep our spirits up, there are loads of things to do. This is also a good time for people not too interested in books, to pick one up and discover the magic that bibliophiles have been enjoying all this time. Who knows? This social isolation just may make you a convert. And here are 10 examples that are sure to get you started.

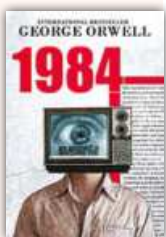
Love in the Time of Cholera by Gabriel García Márquez

Colombian author Márquez, best known for pioneering magic realism, takes us on a journey through a human's soul. Although, pure romance is the central theme of the novel, the author draws parallels of that love by introducing love of money, status, power, etc. to the plot. It is a must-read in 2020 because the author takes daily mundane things and makes us appreciate these little things in life by elevating them to a divine, enchanting, magnificent and magical level.



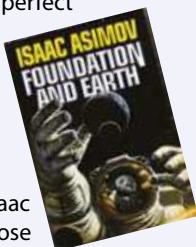
Great Expectation by Charles Dickens

Most novels are known for their protagonist's remarkable journey from a distortion of his/her idea of self to finding himself/herself. However, Charles Dickens, the Victorian social critique, take us through Pip's innocence to his development of self-identity to the end where his idea of self is completely distorted. It is a book that takes the reader through the difference of class and its effects on society (something crystallised by the pandemic), the different forms of crime and punishment along with tactical imagery and symbolism of capitalism, emotion and their effects on society.



Foundation and the Earth by Isaac Asimov

The book is perfect for those wondering what the future may hold for Earth and mankind. Isaac Asimov, whose predictions of the 21st century have been mostly accurate, takes readers beyond the Galactic Age to different human civilisations in space. The book explores all the sciences, economics, philosophy, politics and psychology in simple beautiful English.



The Scarlet Letter by Nathaniel Hawthorne

A controversial novel often ending up in Essential American Novel list and Banned Book lists, explores puritanical colonial America, exposing the essence of public and, private truth, institutional and human morality, the natures of evil itself and the powers of redemption and revenge.

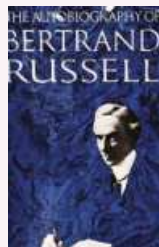
The Scarlet Letter is a powerful controversial tale of truth, virtue, morality, religion and redemption that takes place against the backdrop of a judgemental 17th century puritan colony. It is a book that believes in the power of redemption over revenge, love over hate, human morality over institutional morality, everything that we need now and everything today's youth aspires to.



The Autobiography of Bertrand Russell

The book is a door to famous British philosopher Bertrand Russell's life, which he led on the basis of logical reasoning and philosophical ideas, a combination rarely seen. The book not only gives a personal history of major historical events and people, but also useful personal philosophies and morals which the critique develops throughout his life.

The book in its essence is an ode to love and an advice to never stop searching for it. The words pull us down to the core of our souls and attempts to explain and understand life, economy, and survival.



1984 by George Orwell

Being the most famous dystopian novel, 1984 not only explores a totalitarian social and political structure, but also love, thriller, and horror. George Orwell takes inspiration from our reality and rewrites history to create another reality.

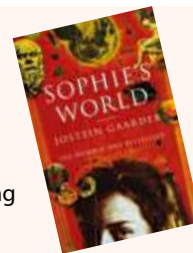
The book is relevant for numerous reasons throughout history, but especially so in the 21st century because of its views on truth, flagrant lies, and the nature of exercising power over people through the distortion of reality.



Sophie's World by Jostein Gaarder

Perfectly summarising Socrates's quote: "All philosophy begins with wonder." Gaarder turns philosophy into fiction and fiction into philosophy in "Sophie's World". The book is often referred to as being "a history of philosophy."

A 14-year-old girl name Sophie starts receiving anonymous letters from a man claiming to be a philosopher and a girl named Hilda, two people who are complete strangers to her. However, everything ties together in the end with an enormous plot twist during which she has to apply all the philosophical theories she has learned in her daily life.



A Brief History of Time by Stephen Hawking

Stephen Hawking did an amazing job bringing some of the most complex concepts of theoretical physics such as quantum theory and the theory of general relativity by toning it down to simple English so that an average person can understand and make a little bit more sense of the universe, reality and the concept of time.

The most beautiful characteristic about this book is that there is no heated battle between religion and science, Hawking explores all the possibilities with scientific reasoning.



Rebecca by Daphne du Maurier

The novel puts forward a mystery disguised as romance that explores the criminal mind through the eyes of the people closest to the criminal. The gothic novel explores themes of gender and the performance of femininity, rivalry and repressed sexuality by amplifying the horror felt by the lost, confused, and scared narrative voice.



The Book Thief by Markus Zusak

This is a ballad of death. Death not only narrates the story, but shakes and changes each character to their core. Through this personification of death, readers learn that some things, such as death, is inevitable. However, as the book's protagonist finds power, love and joy regardless of what befalls her, the reader is reassured that no matter what happens he/she will be alright and there will always be someone or something to pick them up. It is a tale about the oneness of people, materials and nature.

