

Classics by Year

Miguel de Cervantes **Don Quixote** 1612 (Spanish)

Originally published in Spanish in 1605, Cervantes' satire about a gentle visionary who becomes a knight after reading too many chivalric romances is a universal tale of idealism versus practicality.

Daniel Defoe **Robinson Crusoe** 1719 (English)

Defoe's novel about a castaway marooned for twenty-four years on a deserted island is an engrossing story of survival, civilization, and barbarism.

Jonathan Swift, **Gulliver's Travels** 1726 (England)

Gulliver encounters dwarfs and giants and has other strange adventures when his ship is wrecked in distant lands.

Jane Austen **Pride and Prejudice** 1813 (England)

A delightful comedy of marriage traces the courtship of Elizabeth and Darcy as they overcome his pride and her prejudice and fall in love. (Also wrote Sense and Sensibility, Mansfield Park and Emma

Mary W Shelley, **Frankenstein** 1819 (England)

A gothic tale of terror in which Frankenstein creates a monster from corpses.

Sir Walter Scott, **Ivanhoe** 1819 (England)

Tale of Ivanhoe, the disinherited knight, Lady Rowena, Richard the Lion-Hearted, and Robin Hood at the time of the Crusades.

Charlotte Bronte **Jane Eyre** 1847 (England)

Jane Eyre's ill-fated love for the brooding Mr. Rochester endures in this story of a strong-willed heroine who refuses to compromise herself.

Emily Bronte **Wuthering Heights** 1847 (England)

Catherine and Heathcliff are the tempestuous lovers in this tale of passion and revenge on the Yorkshire moors.

Nathaniel Hawthorne **The Scarlet Letter** 1850

Hawthorne's novel is a study of sin, guilt, and revenge. Adulteress Hester Prynne must bear public humiliation but Roger Chillingworth and Arthur Dimmesdale suffer equally.

Gustave Flaubert, **Madame Bovary** 1856 (France)

In her extramarital affairs, a bored young wife seeks unsuccessfully to find the emotional experiences she craves.

Herman Melville **Moby Dick** 1851

Captain Ahab's obsessive struggle to defeat Moby Dick, the great white whale who maimed him, is the focus of Melville's masterpiece.

Harriet Beecher Stowe **Uncle Tom's Cabin** 1852

Stowe's sentimental but realistic novel is often credited with heightening public awareness about the evils of slavery, thus hastening the Civil War.

Charles Dickens **A Tale of Two Cities** 1859 (English)

This dramatic story of Paris and London during the Reign of Terror contains some of Dickens' most memorable characters—Madame Defarge with her knitting and the self-sacrificing Sidney Carton.

George Eliot **Silas Marner** 1861 (English)

This classic story shows redemption for a lonely and bitter man in the form of a child who brings him love and hope.

Lewis Carroll, **Alice's Adventures in Wonderland** 1865 (English)

A fantasy in which Alice follows the White Rabbit to a dream world.

Mark Twain **The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn** 1884

Justice and honor are celebrated in this story about Huck's adventures on the Mississippi River with the runaway slave Jim.

Robert Lewis Stevenson **Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde** (Scotland) 1885

Dr. Jekyll is a kind hearted, upstanding gentleman by day, who through a special potion, turns into an evil man at night.

Fyodor Dostoevsky **Crime and Punishment** 1886

First published in Russian in 1866, this masterful psychological novel shows the horror and remorse of Raskolnikoff, a student, after he has killed an old woman for her money.

Edward Bellamy, **Looking Backward: 2000-1887** 1887

Written in 1887 about a young man who travels in time to a utopian year 2000, where economic security and a healthy moral environment have reduced crime.

Leo Tolstoy **War and Peace** 1889 (Russian)

An enormous cast of characters brings life to Tolstoy's panoramic chronicle of Napoleonic Russia. Originally published in the 1860s.

Oscar Wilde **Picture of Dorian Gray** 1889

The novel tells of a young man named Dorian Gray, the subject of a painting by artist Basil Hallward. Basil is impressed by Dorian's beauty and becomes infatuated with him, believing his beauty is responsible for a new mode in his art. *The Picture of Dorian Gray* is considered a work of classic gothic horror fiction

Thomas Hardy, **Tess of the D'Urbervilles** 1891 (English)

The happiness of Tess and her husband is destroyed when she confesses that she bore a child as the result of a forced sexual relationship with her employer's son.

Stephen Crane **The Red Badge of Courage** 1895

Through the eyes of Henry Fleming, a young Civil War soldier, we see the fears of battle and the inexplicable courage that comes when soldiers unite in a wartime machine.

H.G Wells, **The Time Machine** (England)1895

A scientist invents a machine that transports him into the future.

H.G. Wells—**The Invisible Man**

A scientist named Griffin finds a way to turn himself invisible and terrorize a town.

Kate Chopin **The Awakening** 1899

The story of a New Orleans woman who abandons her husband and children to search for love and self-understanding.

Joseph Conrad **Heart of Darkness** 1902 (English)

Marlow relates the tale of Mr. Kurtz, successful in his greedy quest for ivory in the African Congo but leaving in its place hunger, death and slavery, for the natives.

Jack London **The Call of the Wild** 1903

When his beloved master is killed, the dog Buck flees to the wild, where he becomes the leader of a wolf pack. Rousing adventure set in Alaska's Klondike country.

Edith Wharton **Ethan Frome** 1911

An unhappy couple attempts suicide but find a far worse fate in this tale of irony and retribution in rural New England.

D.H. Lawrence, **Sons and Lovers** 1913 (English)

An autobiographical novel about a youth torn between a dominant working-class father and a possessive genteel mother.

Franz Kafka. Die Verwandlung **The Metamorphosis** 1915 (Germany)

Gregor Samsa awakes one morning in his family's apartment to find himself inexplicably transformed overnight into a gigantic insect. Gregor does not immediately recoil from his insect form, but instead chooses to lament his job by saying, "How am I going to get to work?"

W. Somerset Maugham—**Of Human Bondage** 1915

Afflicted with a club foot, Philip Carey suffers through his life, struggling to free himself from a destructive love affair and finally finding contentment as a country doctor.

James Joyce, **A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man** 1916 (Ireland)

A novel about a young man growing up in Ireland and rebelling against family, country, and religion.

Willa Cather **My Antonia** 1918

In spite of a life of hard work, Bohemian immigrant Antonia Shimerda is sustained by the healthy Nebraska soil and her warm-hearted brood of children.

Sinclair Lewis, **Main Street** 1920

A young doctor's wife tries to change the ugliness, dullness and ignorance which prevail in Gopher Prairie, Minn.

Hermann Hesse, **Siddhartha** 1922

Emerging from a kaleidoscope of experiences and pleasures, a young Brahmin ascends to a state of peace and mystic holiness.

James Joyce. **Ulysses** (1922) (Ireland)

Ulysses chronicles the passage of Leopold Bloom through Dublin during an ordinary day, June 16, 1904.

E.M. Forster, **A Passage to India** 1924 (English)

A young English woman in British-ruled India accuses an Indian doctor of sexual assault.

Franz Kafka, **The Trial** 1925 (Germany)

A man is tried for a crime he knows nothing about, yet for which he feels guilt.

F. Scott Fitzgerald **The Great Gatsby** 1925

Jay Gatsby has built an illegal empire to win the love of Daisy Buchanan, but his sacrifices for her prove to be his downfall.

Erich Maria Remarque **All Quiet on the Western Front** 1929

Though the war he describes is World War I, Remarque writes eloquently of all wars in this tale of a young German sent to fight in the trenches.

William Faulkner **The Sound and the Fury** 1929

The moral decay of the Old South is presented through the eyes of four members of the once prominent Compson family of Jefferson, Mississippi.

Wolfe, Thomas **Look Homeward, Angel** 1929

A novel depicting the coming of age of Eugene Gant and his passion to experience life.

William Faulkner, **As I Lay Dying** 1930

The Bundren family takes the ripening corpse of Addie, wife and mother, on a gruesomely comic journey.

Pearl S. Buck **The Good Earth** 1931

This Pulitzer Prize winner follows Wang Lung's family from their early struggles to live off the land to their final disintegration as they move to the city.

Aldous Huxley, **Brave New World** 1931 (England)

A bitter satire of the future, in which the world is controlled by advances in science and social changes.

Arthur Conan Doyle **The Complete Sherlock Holmes** 1936

The Baker Street saga is chronicled in this collection that includes "A Study in Scarlet," the 1887 story that introduced the English detective Sherlock Holmes, and his assistant Dr. Watson.

Margaret Mitchell **Gone with the Wind** 1936

Set against the backdrop of Georgia during the Civil War, Mitchell's massive historical novel chronicles the tempestuous romance of Rhett Butler and Scarlett O'Hara.

Zora Neale Hurston **Their Eyes Were Watching God** 1937 by

An African-American woman in 1930s rural Florida finds freedom and self-knowledge through a personal journey encompassing three very different marriages.

John Steinbeck—**Of Mice and Men**--1937

George and Lenny, itinerant Depression-era farm laborers, have their dream of attaining the good life shattered on a troubled ranch in the the Salinas Valley in Steinbeck's monumental novella of social realism.

John Steinbeck **The Grapes of Wrath** 1939

Proletarian fiction at its finest, Steinbeck's portrait of an Oklahoma family during the Depression spurred legislation to help stricken migrant workers.

Walter Van Tilburg Clark, **The Ox-Bow Incident** 1940

When a group of citizens discovers one of their members has been murdered by cattle rustlers, they form an illegal posse, pursue the murderers, and lynch them.

Richard Wright, **Native Son** 1940

Bigger Thomas, a young man from the Chicago slums, lashes out against a hostile society by committing two murders.

Carson McCullers **The Heart Is a Lonely Hunter** 1940

Is about a deaf man named John Singer and the people he encounters in a 1930s mill town in Georgia. It gives voice to the rejected, forgotten, mistreated and oppressed.

Albert Camus **The Stranger** 1942 (France)

First published in French in 1942, the narrator of Albert Camus' existential masterpiece is an autobiographical figure who does not conform to religious morality or social convention.

George Orwell, **Animal Farm** 1945 (England)

Animals turn the tables on their masters.

Alan Paton **Cry, the Beloved Country** 1948

In lyrical language Paton relates the moving story of a Zulu minister who searches for his children in Johannesburg, only to learn that South African society has destroyed their lives.

George Orwell **Nineteen Eighty Four** 1949

Ignorance is strength and peace is war in Orwell's darkly imaginative vision of a future controlled by Big Brother and the Thought Police.

J.D. Salinger **The Catcher in the Rye** 1951

Fleeing his Pennsylvania prep school, Holden Caulfield holes up in New York City and rails against adult phoniness while trying to lose his innocence.

Ernest Hemingway **The Old Man and the Sea** 1952

Santiago realizes the dream of catching a giant marlin, but he must battle the sharks for two days to bring his prize home.

Ralph Ellison **Invisible Man** 1952

A young African American man moves to New York City and discovers he is "invisible," seen only as a racial stereotype and never as himself.

James Baldwin, **Go Tell It On the Mountain** 1953

Semi-autobiographical novel about a 14-year-old black youth's religious conversion.

Ray Bradbury, **Fahrenheit 451** 1953

Reading is a crime and firemen burn books in this futuristic society.

William Golding **Lord of the Flies** 1954 (English)

A group of English schoolboys, marooned on a tropical island during a time of atomic warfare, bring both civilization and savagery to their community.

Elie Weisel, **Night** 1955

A searing account of the Holocaust as experienced by a 15-year-old boy.

Flannery O'Connor, **A Good Man is Hard to Find** 1955

Social awareness, the grotesque, and the need for faith characterize these stories of the contemporary South.

Saul Bellow, **Seize the Day** 1956

A son grapples with his love and hate for an unworthy father.

Jack Kerouac. **On the Road** 1957

It is a largely autobiographical work that was based on the spontaneous road trips of Kerouac and his friends across mid-century America. It is often considered a defining work of the postwar Beat Generation that was inspired by jazz, poetry, and drug experiences.

James Agee, **A Death in the Family** 1957

Story of loss and heartbreak felt when a young father dies.

Chinua Achebe, **Things Fall Apart** 1958 (African)

Okonkwo, a proud village leader, is driven to murder and suicide by European changes to his traditional Ibo society.

John Knowles **A Separate Peace** 1959

Fifteen years later, the narrator remembers his boarding school roommate. The rivalry that tinged their friendship eventually leads to tragedy.

Gunter Grass, **The Tin Drum** 1959 (German)

Oskar describes the amoral conditions through which he has lived in Germany, both during and after the Hitler regime.

Harper Lee **To Kill a Mockingbird** 1960

Small town Alabama in the 1930s is the setting for this fine novel of a child's brutal introduction to racial prejudice and adult injustice.

John Updike, **Rabbit Run** 1960

It depicts five months in the life of a 26-year-old former high school basketball player named Harry 'Rabbit' Angstrom, and his attempts to escape the constraints of his life.

Joseph Heller **Catch-22** 1961

This black comedy about World War II Army Air Corps aviators attempting to

survive the absurdities of military bureaucracy has become a part of the American collective consciousness.

Jack Kerouac—**The Dharma Bums**

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. (Also wrote **On the Road**)

Ken Kesey **One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest** 1962

A novel about a power struggle between the head nurse and one of the male patients in a mental institution.

Carlos Fuentes, **The Death of Artemio Cruz** 1962 (Mexico)

A powerful Mexican newspaper publisher recalls his life as he lies dying at age 71.

Aleksander Solzhenitsyn, **One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich** 1962

(Soviet Union) Ivan Denisovich Shukhov endures one more day in a Siberian prison camp and finds joy in survival.

Sylvia Plath, **The Bell Jar** 1963

The heartbreaking story of a talented young woman's descent into madness.

Gabriel Garcia Marquez, **One Hundred Years of Solitude** 1967 (Columbia)

A technique called magical realism is used in this portrait of seven generations in the lives of the Buendia family.

Gabriel Garcia Marquez—**Love in the Time of Cholera**

Chaim Potok, **The Chosen** 1967

Friendship between two Jewish boys, one Hasidic and the other Orthodox, begins at a baseball game and flourishes despite their different backgrounds and beliefs.

Kurt Vonnegut, **Slaughterhouse-Five** 1969

Billy Pilgrim, an optometrist from Ilium, New York, shuttles between World War II Dresden and a luxurious zoo on the planet Tralfamadore.

Ernest Gaines, **The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman** 1971

In her 100 years, Miss Jane Pittman experiences it all, from slavery to the civil rights movement.

Robert Cormier, **The Chocolate War** 1974

Jerry Renault challenges the power structure of his school when he refuses to sell chocolates for the annual fundraiser.

Alice Walker, **The Color Purple** 1982

A young woman sees herself as property until another woman teaches her to value herself.

Isabel Allende, **House of the Spirits** 1982 (Chile)

The story of the Trueba family in Chile, from the turn of the century to the violent days of the overthrow of the Salvador Allende government in 1973.

Michael Dorris, **A Yellow Raft in Blue Water** 1987

Three generations of Native American women recount their searches for identity and love.

Laura Esquivel, **Like Water for Chocolate** 1987 (Mexico)

As the youngest of three daughters in a turn-of-the-century Mexican family, Tita may not marry but must remain at home to care for her mother.

Amy Tan, **The Joy Luck Club** 1989 (China)

After her mother's death, a young Chinese-American woman learns of her mother's tragic early life in China.

Homer—the Illiad/The Odessey

Henry David Thoreau—Walden

Ayn Rand—Fountainhead

Ayn Rand—Atlas Shrugged

Tolkien—Lord of the Rings Trilogy

Joseph Conrad—Lord Jim

The Secret Agent

Heart of Darkness

D.H. Lawrence—Lady Chatterly's Lover

Jane Austin—Mansfield Park

Sense and Sensibility

Emma

