

Lifetime Reading List in Chronological Order

Part 2: Middle Ages, Renaissance, & 17th Century

(For the Middle Ages and Early Renaissance [through 1500] I have starred in red (*) the texts likely to be most useful in understanding later authors.)

Date Read	Author's Life Span	Author and Title
	c. 349-425	Prudentius: Psychomachia
	354-430	* Augustine: Confessions
	354-430	Augustine: The City of God (A.D. 426)
	480?-524	* Boethius: The Consolation of Philosophy
	5 th c. A.D.	Nonnus: Dionysiaca
	late 5 th c.	Musaeus: Hero and Leandro
	500-565	Procopius: The Secret History
	c. 610-632	The Qur'an
	673-735	Bede: The Ecclesiastical History of the English People (c. 731)
	9 th c.	* The Thousand and One Nights
	c. 1000	* Beowulf
	c. 976-1015	Lady Murasaki: The Tale of Genji
	1048-?	Omar Khayyam: The Rubaiyat
	c. 1100-1154	Geoffrey of Monmouth: History of the Kings of Britain
	c. 1140-1170	* The Song of Roland
	c. 1150-1190	Chrétien de Troyes: Erec et Enide
		Chrétien de Troyes: Cligés
		* Chrétien de Troyes: Yvain
		* Chrétien de Troyes: Lancelot
		* Chrétien de Troyes: Perceval (c. 1180)
	late 12 th c.	Marie de France: The Lays
	late 12 th c.	Andreas Capellanus: The Art of Courtly Love (1184-1186)
	† c. 1210	Gottfried Von Strassburg: Tristan and Isolde
	early 13 th c.	Anonymous: The Poem of the Cid
	c. 1170-c. 1230	Walter von der Vogelweide: Poems (in Penguin Book of German Verse)

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	c. 1212-c. 1237 / after 1237-1305	Guillaume de Lorris & Jean de Meun: The Romance of the Rose (1237-c. 1277)
	c. 13 th -14 th c.	Gesta Romanorum (selections)
	c. 1170-1241	Wolfram von Eschenbach: Parzival (c. 1 st quarter 13 th century)
	1178-1241	Snorri Sturluson: The Prose Edda (c. 1220)
	before 13 th c.	Anonymous: Nibelungenleid
	1221-1274	St. Bonaventure: Itinerarium Mentis ad Deum (The Mind's Road to God)
	1225-1274	St. Thomas Aquinas: Summa Theologica and Summa contra Gentiles: Selections
	c. 1235-1276	Guido Guinizelli: Poems (in Penguin Book of Italian Verse)
	1236-1306	Jacopone da Todi: Poems (in Penguin Book of Italian Verse)
	c. 1245-1285	Rutebeuf: Poems (in Penguin Book of French Verse)
	c. 1255-1300	Guido Cavalcanti: Poems (in Penguin Book of Italian Verse)
	1265-1321	* Dante: The Divine Comedy [at least Inferno] (c. 1304-1321)
	1304-1374	* Francesco Petrarca: Canzoniere (selections)
	c. 1350	Sir Gawain and the Green Knight
	1313-1375	* Giovanni Boccaccio: Decameron (selected stories) (c. 1350-1353)
	c. 1343-1400	* Chaucer: The Canterbury Tales (c. 1380s)
	c. 1343-1400	Chaucer: Troilus and Criseyde (c. 1380-1387)
	c. 1330-1400	Luo Kuan-Chung: The Romance of the Three Kingdoms, tr. Moss Roberts
	1363-c. 1434	Christine de Pisan: The Book of the City of Ladies (c. 1405)
	1349-1465	Charles d'Orléans: Poems (in Penguin Book of French Verse)
	1404-1472	Leon Battista Alberti: On Painting (1436)
	1406-1457	Lorenzo Valla: Discourse on the Forgery of the Alleged Donation of Constantine (1440)
	1454-1494	Angelo Poliziano: Stanzas for the Joust of Giuliano de' Medici (1478)
	1431-after 1463	Françoise Villon: The Testaments (c. 1456)
	1432-1484	Luigi Pulci: Morgante (1483)
	1400-1470	* Sir Thomas Malory: Le Morte d'Arthur (1485)
	1463-1494	Pico della Mirandola: On the Dignity of Man (1486)

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	c. 1434-1494	Matteo Maria Boiardo: Orlando Innamorato (Roland in Love) (1495)
	c. 1465-1541	Fernando de Rojas: La Celestina (1499)

1500-1699

Since I am mostly interested in narrative, I give short shrift to poets and philosophers from this point on, although a representative selection of major English poets do appear throughout, as well as a few major poets from other languages (primarily Italian). Still, English authors you might expect to see—e.g., Thomas Wyatt, Edmund Spenser (*The Faerie Queen* and *Epithalamium*), Sir Philip Sydney (*Astrophel and Stella*), Thomas Campion, Andrew Marvell, Thomas Wyatt, George Herbert, and John Dryden—are not listed here. Nor will one find Robert Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy* or Sir Thomas Browne's *Urne-Buriall*, which some may find interesting, or later works by scientists such as Copernicus and Galileo. For Italian poets not included below, one might read the Renaissance authors: Gaspara Stampa, Veronica Franco, and Pietro Bembo. For early French poets: among others, Marguerite de Navarre's *The Heptameron*. For Spanish poets: Antonio de Guevara, Jorge de Montemayor, Francisco de Quevedo, Fray Luis de León, St. John of the Cross, Luis de Góngora, and Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz.

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	1466/69-1536	Desiderius Erasmus: In Praise of Folly (1511)
	1452-1519	Leonardo da Vinci: Notebooks (selections)
	1469-1527	Niccolò Machiavelli: The Prince (1513)
	1469-1527	Niccolò Machiavelli: The Mandragola (1518)
	1478-1529	Baldassare Castiglione: The Book of the Courtier (1528)
	1474-1533	Lodovico Ariosto: Orlando Furioso (1532) (selections)
	c. 1494-1553	François Rabelais: Gargantua and Pantagruel (1532-)
	1475-1564	Michelangelo: Poems (in Penguin Book of Italian Verse)
	1496-1544	Clément Marot: Poems (in Penguin Book of French Verse)
	c. 1501-1563	Maurice Scève: Poems (in Penguin Book of French Verse)
	1522-1560	Joachim Du Bellay: Poems (in Penguin Book of French Verse)
	c. 1524-1566	Louise Labé: Poems (in Penguin Book of French Verse)
	1524-1585	Pierre de Ronsard: Poems (in Penguin Book of French Verse)
	1511-1574	Giorgio Vasari: The Lives of the Artists (1550) (selections)
	mid-16th c.	Anonymous: Lazarillo de Tormes (1554)
	1500-1571	Benvenuto Cellini: Autobiography (1558-)
	c. 1524-1580	Luis de Camões: The Lusiads (1572)
	1544-1595	Torquato Tasso: Aminta (1573)
	1544-1595	Torquato Tasso: Jerusalem Delivered (1580) (selections)

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	1500-1582	Wu Cheng'en: Journey to the West (tr. as Monkey by Arthur Waley)
	1533-1592	Michel de Montaigne: Essays (1580)
	1548-1600	Giordano Bruno: The Candle Bearer (Il Candelaio) (1582)
	1564-1593	Christopher Marlowe: Doctor Faustus (1588)
	1554-1600	Richard Hooker: Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity: Book I (1593)
	1552-1630	Agrippa d'Aubigné: Poems (in Penguin Book of French Verse)
	1564-1616	Shakespeare: Venus and Adonis
		Shakespeare: The Sonnets
		Shakespeare: The Comedy of Errors
		Shakespeare: The Tragedy of King Richard III
		Shakespeare: Love's Labour's Lost
		Shakespeare: The Two Gentlemen of Verona
		Shakespeare: The Taming of the Shrew
		Shakespeare: A Midsummer Night's Dream
		Shakespeare: Romeo and Juliet
		Shakespeare: The Merchant of Venice
		Shakespeare: Much Ado About Nothing
		Shakespeare: As You Like It
		Shakespeare: Twelfth Night; or, What You Will
		Shakespeare: The Tragedy of King Richard II
		Shakespeare: Henry IV, Part I
		Shakespeare: Henry IV, Part II
		Shakespeare: Henry V
		Shakespeare: Julius Caesar
		Shakespeare: All's Well that Ends Well
		Shakespeare: Measure for Measure
		Shakespeare: Hamlet, Prince of Denmark
		Shakespeare: Othello, the Moor of Venice

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		Shakespeare: King Lear
		Shakespeare: Macbeth
		Shakespeare: Antony and Cleopatra
		Shakespeare: Coriolanus
		Shakespeare: The Winter's Tale
		Shakespeare: The Tempest
	1573-1637	Ben Jonson: Every Man in His Humor (1601)
		Ben Jonson: Volpone or The Fox (1606)
		Ben Jonson: The Alchemist (1610)
	1547-1616	Miguel de Cervantes: Don Quijote (1605, 1615)
	1569-1625	Giambattista Marino: Poems (in Penguin Book of Italian Verse)
	1562-1635	Lope de Vega: Fuente Ovejuna (1619)
	1572-1631	John Donne: Selected Poems
	c. 1580-c. 1634	John Webster: The Duchess of Malfi (1623)
	1568-1639	Tommaso Campanella: The City of the Sun (1623)
	c. 1571-1648	Tirso de Molina: The Trickster of Seville (c. 1630)
	1591-1674	Robert Herrick: Selected Poems
	1573-1637	Ben Jonson: Selected Poems
	1600-1681	Calderon de la Barca: Life Is a Dream (c. 1635)
	1621-1695	Jean de la Fontaine: Fables
	1588-1679	Thomas Hobbes: Leviathan (1651) (selections)
	1622-1673	Molière: The School for Wives (1662)
	1608-1674	John Milton: Paradise Lost (1665)
	1593-1633	George Herbert: Selected Poems
	1622-1673	Molière: Don Juan (1665)
	1622-1673	Molière: The Misanthrope (1666)
	1622-1673	Molière: The Doctor In Spite of Himself [The Reluctant Doctor] (1666)
	1622-1673	Molière: The Miser (1668)

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	1622-1673	Molière: Tartuffe (1669)
	1623-1662	Blaise Pascal: Pensées: Of the Necessity of the Wager, etc. (1870)
	1633-1703	Samuel Pepys: Diary (selections) (1660-1669; pub. 1825)
	1621-1678	Andrew Marvell: Selected Poems
	1632-1677	Benedict de Spinoza: Ethics: Part IV (Of Human Bondage) [E-text] (1676)
		Benedict de Spinoza: Ethics: Part V (Of Human Freedom) [E-text] (1676)
	1634-1693	Madame de La Fayette: The Princess of Clèves (1678)
	1628-1688	John Bunyan: The Pilgrim's Progress (1678)
	1640-1689	Aphra Behn: Oroonoko; or, The Royal Slave (1688)
	1644-1694	Matsuo Bashō: The Narrow Road to the Deep North (1689)
	1632-1704	John Locke: Second Treatise on Civil Government (1690) [E-text]