

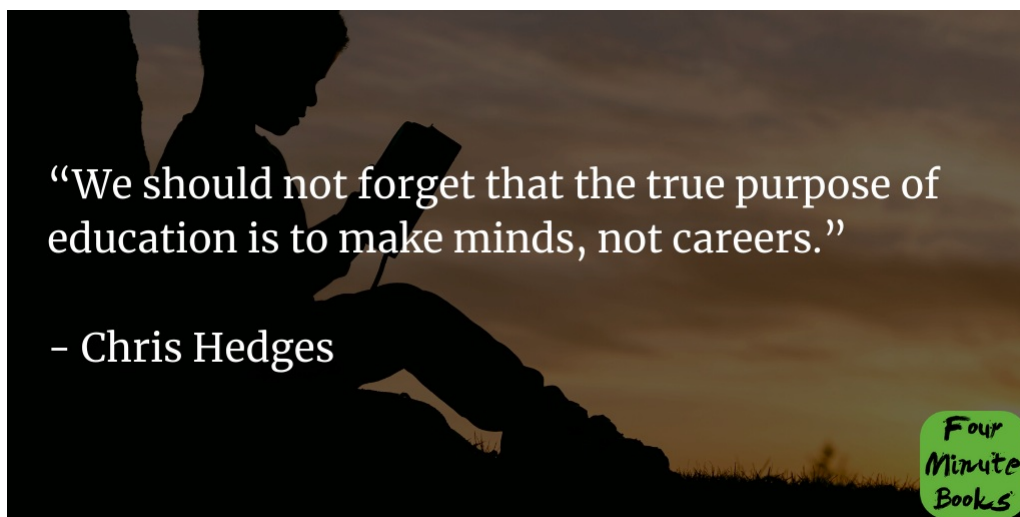
Empire Of Illusion Summary

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1-Sentence-Summary: *Empire Of Illusion* motivates you to watch less TV and get better at reading by outlining the sharp drop in literacy levels in the United States in recent years, the negative effects that have followed, and the dark future ahead if we continue on this path.

Read in: 4 minutes

Favorite quote from the author:



Once when I was in high school I went without TV for an entire month. I don't remember the immediate benefits, unfortunately. But today I still don't really care for it much and it makes my life so much better.

I get more time to read, think, and be with my loved ones. Instead of watching someone else live their "dreams," I get to make mine become reality.

But sadly, too many people don't get to experience this kind of life. They're stuck in a fake world because of an addiction to entertainment. They rob themselves of literacy and society of its values.

It's the facts and consequences of these issues that are the main subject of Chris Hedges' *Empire of Illusion: The End of Literacy and the Triumph of Spectacle*. He goes into the many ways our love for entertainment is making our world worse.

Here are the 3 most terrifying lessons I've discovered about our current state:

1. By watching too much TV and not reading enough books, you cut yourself off from the truths of reality.
2. Because we as a society have become more illiterate, we're beginning to limit our freedoms.
3. We're getting worse at knowing what's right and wrong, and reaping the consequences because we don't value the humanities anymore.

Are you ready to get smarter and more motivation to read? Let's get right to it!

Lesson 1: **You don't understand reality and aren't as intelligent when you watch too much TV.**

Believe it or not, in today's modern world, illiteracy is actually a growing problem. The author calls it an illiteracy epidemic and says this failure of our education is making us illusion-prone. A shocking one-third of the US population is either completely illiterate or barely literate.

How did we get here? Americans don't read nearly as much as in previous years. Researchers found that after graduating, one-third of people won't read another book for the rest of their life!

Aldous Huxley actually eerily foreshadowed this problem in his novel *Brave New World* when he depicted a highly advanced society in the future that was so obsessed with consuming entertainment that nobody wanted to read.

The main problem with this isn't that we don't get any information, the problem is that it may not be the right information because TV is great at distorting reality. Studies have estimated the TV is on for around seven hours a day in the average American household. By the time you're 65, this means you've spent nine years in front of the TV.

We like it because it's easy to take in presents us with predictable content and familiar cliches. It also gives us the illusion of excitement and comfort while we do nothing with our own lives.

Lesson 2: **Our freedom is at risk because we've stopped caring so much for reading.**

All of this time in front of media puts our democracy at risk. TV is a powerful authority. Those who appear on the screen are validated, while those who aren't are essentially labeled as insignificant. This drives us to be a society of narcissists who will do anything for illusions of money, fame, or sex appeal instead of the common good.

It also perpetuates the idea that we should strive to be on TV. We see this in the fact that the average American is more likely to apply to be on a reality television show than they are to apply at a prestigious university.

By doing this, people are essentially lining up to volunteer to live under constant surveillance. **This normalizes the fact that we as American citizens are under constant monitoring by not only the government but also big corporations, which often infringe upon our constitutional rights.**

As if this weren't bad enough, politicians also use this to their advantage. Modern-day politics are more and more like TV, where they sell smiles and empty slogans instead of real facts and meaningful propositions. They strive to sell the same false sense of intimacy that TV viewers feel to the stars they watch.

Lesson 3: As we've religated the humanities to the sidelines in recent years, we've decayed morally and are reaping the consequences.

American education has strayed from the humanities in recent years, and the author says this is the cause of many of our political and economic difficulties. While a college education used to expand the mind, nowadays it is mostly just treated as a way to get a job.

So, we have focused less and less on teaching humanities, and students are less and less interested in them.

There are some that argue our education is now so focused on skills rather than humanities and ethics that we are losing our culture. **If you merely learn what you need to for a technical job, you may not learn to debate and think about existential and ethical issues.** These are key to building morals and values.

A culture that doesn't connect morality and power is bound for collapse, and this is a great danger for our society today. Students of today that aren't taught to think and explore philosophy and humanities won't be able to save us from our current problems because they won't be able to envision alternative futures.

The decay of humanities is making way for more generations of managers and bureaucrats rather than free and future thinkers that we need.

Empire Of Illusion Review

I didn't like *Empire Of Illusion* as much as I thought I would, at least not the latter parts of it anyway. Still, the book brings up some really important issues. Unless we start doing things differently, these illusions we fall for are going to have a huge negative impact on our

society. And in many ways they already are.

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Who would I recommend the Empire Of Illusion summary to?

The 53-year-old who watches a lot of TV and doesn't think it's harming anyone, the 21-year-old who thinks that it's not a problem that nobody in their generation likes to read, and anybody that wants to stop the decline of education, culture, and unity.