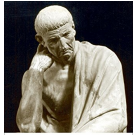


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Most Recommended Books (/most-recommended-books)



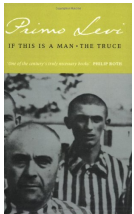
The Nicomachean Ethics by Aristotle

(<https://fivebooks.com/book/nicomachean-ethics-by-aristotle/>)

“According to Aristotle, it is hard to become virtuous, and hard to become vicious too. The character of most people is somewhere in the middle.” (<https://fivebooks.com/best-books/moral-character-christian-miller/#book-697>)

Christian B Miller (<https://fivebooks.com/people/christian-b-miller/>), Philosopher

Read more (<https://fivebooks.com/book/nicomachean-ethics-by-aristotle/>)

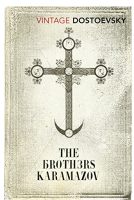


If This Is a Man by Primo Levi (<https://fivebooks.com/book/if-this-is-a-man-primo-levi/>)

“It’s about his 11 months in Auschwitz. I was reading this over the weekend—just to bone up for this interview—and just like every other time I’ve read it, it stretches my ability to comprehend. The physical and emotional pain is extremely intense. Even the most inured cynic is taken aback by the infrastructure of human cruelty in the camp.” (<https://fivebooks.com/best-books/philosophy-prison-andy-west/#book-1288>)

Andy West (<https://fivebooks.com/people/andy-west/>), Philosopher

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The Brothers Karamazov by Fyodor Dostoevsky

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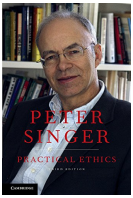
fyodor-
dostoevsky/)

“Dostoevsky was a devout Christian and *The Brothers Karamazov*, his last and possibly greatest novel, was a heartfelt plea for the necessity of faith. The phrase ‘If God does not exist, everything is permitted’ is often attributed to Dostoevsky. He actually never wrote that, but the sentiment certainly runs through much of his work, and most especially through *The Brothers Karamazov*.”

(<https://fivebooks.com/best-books/kenan-malik-on-morality-without-god/#book-5153>)

Kenan Malik (<https://fivebooks.com/people/kenan-malik/>), Science Writer

Read more (<https://fivebooks.com/book/brothers-karamazov-by-fyodor-dostoevsky/>)



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Practical Ethics by Peter Singer (<https://fivebooks.com/book/practical-ethics-by-peter-singer/>)

“Practical Ethics came out in 1979, just before I began studying philosophy. I loved its rigour, and I found Peter Singer almost impossible to argue with. I agreed with almost every position he took on every issue. There were chapters on abortion, on animal rights, on how much money we can give to the poor. It’s really the blueprint for everything he’s written subsequently. He is prolific, but if you want to know what Singer believes on a given topic, you may as well go back to Practical Ethics. There’s a whole chapter on the fact that if we know that people are going to die in the Third World and we fail to do something about it, we’re as responsible for their murder as if we put a bullet through their heads. It’s a very practical book which addresses these controversial issues. I became a vegetarian at university after reading it, so it had a big effect on my life. I’ve since moved away from his very rigid utilitarianism on other topics, but I still find his arguments about how we should treat animals very persuasive.”

(<https://fivebooks.com/best-books/david-edmonds-ethical-problems/#book-6269>)

David Edmonds (<https://fivebooks.com/people/david-edmonds/>), Philosopher

Read more (<https://fivebooks.com/book/practical-ethics-by-peter-singer/>)



After Virtue by Alasdair MacIntyre (<https://fivebooks.com/book/after-virtue-study-moral-theory-by-alasdair-macintyre/>)

“MacIntyre’s point is that we think we’re talking about morality, but actually we’re just left with the fragments of morality. Because what’s been lost is the central idea of human beings as creatures with an inherent end or purpose.” (<https://fivebooks.com/best-books/virtue-edward-skidelsky/#book-699>)

Edward Skidelsky (<https://fivebooks.com/people/edward-skidelsky/>), Philosopher

Read more (<https://fivebooks.com/book/after-virtue-study-moral-theory-by-alasdair-macintyre/>)

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Modern living is an ethical minefield. How should we behave in private and in public, what are our duties to others? How do these things change in a world where we run up against people with very different answers to our own? We have a very extensive range of

interviews with some of the world's most eminent philosophers discussing books on these knotty problems of contemporary morality from every angle as well as more perennial ethical issues, such as the existence, or otherwise, of free will.

On issues with a very particular contemporary resonance, Paul Boddington discusses ethics for artificial intelligence (<https://fivebooks.com/best-books/ethics-artificial-intelligence/>), Louise Gray chooses her best books on the ethics of eating meat (<https://fivebooks.com/best-books/eating-meat-louise-gray-ethical-carnivore/>) and Donna Dickenson talks about body shopping (<https://fivebooks.com/best-books/donna-dickenson-on-body-shopping/>). Hugh Gusterson talks about drone warfare (<https://fivebooks.com/best-books/hugh-gusterson-drone-warfare/>), Clive Stafford Smith discusses capital punishment (<https://fivebooks.com/best-books/clive-stafford-smith-on-capital-punishment/>), Juan Mendez discusses torture (<https://fivebooks.com/best-books/juan-mendez-on-torture/>) and Mary Robinson talks about climate justice (<https://fivebooks.com/best-books/climate-justice-mary-robinson/>). Anthony Julius discusses censorship (<https://fivebooks.com/best-books/anthony-julius-on-censorship/>). Alex Carlile talks about ethics in public life (<https://fivebooks.com/best-books/alex-carlile-on-ethics-in-public-life/>) and A C Grayling discusses being good in the modern world (<https://fivebooks.com/best-books/ac-grayling-being-good/>). Peter Berkovitz talks about liberty and morality (<https://fivebooks.com/best-books/peter-berkowitz-on-liberty-and-morality/>).

Meanwhile, on more perennial themes, Paul Russell discusses free will and responsibility (<https://fivebooks.com/best-books/free-will-responsibility-paul-russell/>), Jonathan Glover discusses moral philosophy (<https://fivebooks.com/best-books/jonathan-glover-moral-philosophy/>) and both Mary Warnock (<https://fivebooks.com/best-books/mary-warnock-godless-morality/>) and Kenan Malik (<https://fivebooks.com/best-books/kenan-malik-on-morality-without-god/>) choose their best books on morality without God. Edward Skidelsky chooses his best books on virtue (<https://fivebooks.com/best-books/virtue-edward-skidelsky/>) and Adam Haslett his on evil (<https://fivebooks.com/best-books/adam-haslett-on-evil/>). Paula Fredriksen discusses sin (<https://fivebooks.com/best-books/paula-fredriksen-on-sin/>). Kwame Anthony Appiah discusses the philosophical underpinnings of honour (<https://fivebooks.com/best-books/kwame-anthony-appiah-on-honour/>). Will MacAskill talks about effective altruism (<https://fivebooks.com/best-books/effective-altruism-will-macaskill/>) and David Edmonds discusses how to apply philosophical thinking to practical ethical problems (<https://fivebooks.com/best-books/david-edmonds-ethical-problems/>).

Beyond that we have interviews covering books on moral character (<https://fivebooks.com/best-books/moral-character-christian-miller/>), eugenics (<https://fivebooks.com/best-books/eugenics-philippa-levine/>), deceit (<https://fivebooks.com/best-books/dallas-denery-deceit/>), assassination (<https://fivebooks.com/best-books/lindsay-porter-on-assassination/>) and more.

The best books on **Philosophy and Prison**, recommended by Andy West (<https://fivebooks.com/best-books/philosophy-prison-andy-west/>)

By teaching philosophy in prisons, British philosopher Andy West was not only able to engage with core issues of the human condition, but also to come to terms with members of his own family's experience of being in prison. Here, he talks us through some books that deal with being locked up, from Auschwitz to Vancouver Island, as well as one by a victim of violent crime.

The best books on **Ethical Problems**, recommended by David Edmonds (<https://fivebooks.com/best-books/david-edmonds-ethical-problems/>)

Given the choice between allowing five people to die, and killing one person, what would you do? What is the utilitarian argument for vegetarianism? Should we be able to sell our kidneys? The philosopher suggests some answers and picks the best books on 'ethical problems.'

The best books on **Morality Without God**, recommended by Kenan Malik (<https://fivebooks.com/best-books/kenan-malik-on-morality-without-god/>)

Religion is often presented as the guardian of moral values. The problem with this, says the author and broadcaster, is that it diminishes what it means to be human. He picks the best books on morality without God.

The best books on **World Philosophy**, recommended by Bryan Van Norden (<https://fivebooks.com/best-books/world-philosophy-bryan-van-norden/>)

The study of philosophy in the Western world is often parochial, and limited to the study of the Anglo-European tradition. It's time to widen our focus, advises the author and philosopher Bryan Van Norden. Here he selects five foundational texts of philosophical traditions worldwide.

The best books on **Effective Altruism**, recommended by Will MacAskill (<https://fivebooks.com/best-books/effective-altruism-will-macaskill/>)

Should you feel responsible for helping the world become better? And if so, how should you use your time, money, and career to have the biggest possible impact? These are the questions addressed by the effective altruism movement. One of its leading figures, Will MacAskill, recommends the best books to answer them.

The best books on **War**, recommended by Cécile Fabre (<https://fivebooks.com/best-books/cecile-fabre-war/>)

If killing is wrong, how can going to war be justified? Is it always wrong to kill civilians? If a Nazi soldier were billeted in your home, should you respond when he greets you? Philosopher Cécile Fabre chooses Five Books that help explore the profound ethical dilemmas of war.

The best books on **Aristotle**, recommended by Edith Hall (<https://fivebooks.com/best-books/aristotle-edith-hall/>)

Aristotle, says Edith Hall, is “quite simply the most important intellectual who ever lived.” Here the author and classicist selects five key Aristotle books to further your understanding of the great philosopher's life and work.

The best books on **Moral Character**, recommended by Christian B Miller (<https://fivebooks.com/best-books/moral-character-christian-miller/>)

Why do apparently ‘good’ people sometimes behave deplorably? Christian B Miller, professor of philosophy at Wake Forest University, selects five books that explore the subject of moral character and warns us to be cautious of making inferences about the underlying motives of others – and ourselves.

The best books on **Free Will and Responsibility**, recommended by Paul Russell (<https://fivebooks.com/best-books/free-will-responsibility-paul-russell/>)

Many philosophical theories try to evade the uncomfortable truth that luck and fate play a role in the conduct of our moral lives, argues philosopher Paul Russell. He chooses the best books on free will and responsibility.

The best books on **Ethics for Artificial Intelligence**, recommended by Paula Boddington (<https://fivebooks.com/best-books/ethics-artificial-intelligence/>)

Advances in artificial intelligence pose a myriad of ethical questions, but the most incisive thinking on this subject says more about humans than it does about machines, says Paula Boddington, Oxford academic and author of *Towards a Code of Ethics for Artificial Intelligence*.

The best books on **Eating Meat**, recommended by Louise Gray (<https://fivebooks.com/best-books/eating-meat-louise-gray-ethical-carnivore/>)

What does it mean to be an ethical meat-eater? Author and journalist Louise Gray chooses five books that examine the impact of our omnivorous lifestyle, and explains why she spent a year only eating the animals she had killed herself.

The Best Adam Smith Books, recommended by Dennis Rasmussen (<https://fivebooks.com/best-books/adam-smith-dennis-rasmussen/>)

Adam Smith tends to be seen as the founder of capitalism and modern economics, but he was, first and foremost, a moral philosopher. Dennis Rasmussen, author of *The Infidel and the Professor*—a book about Smith's friendship with David Hume—selects the best books by and about Adam Smith.

The best books on **Eugenics**, recommended by Philippa Levine (<https://fivebooks.com/best-books/eugenics-philippa-levine/>)

The term 'eugenics' elicits queasiness amongst those who associate it with the Nazis. But Winston Churchill, George Bernard Shaw and Margaret Sanger were among its many proponents in the interwar period. Why? Philippa Levine, professor of history at the University of Texas, explains.

The best books on **Drone Warfare**, recommended by Hugh Gusterson (<https://fivebooks.com/best-books/hugh-gusterson-drone-warfare/>)

The introduction of drones “makes possible perpetual war without costs”, warns the anthropology professor and security expert Hugh Gusterson. Here he selects the best books that examine their ethical, psychological and political impact upon 21st century warfare.

The best books on **Deceit**, recommended by Dallas Denery (<https://fivebooks.com/best-books/dallas-denery-deceit/>)

The Professor of History outlines how our understanding of deceit has changed: from a devilish sin in the Middle Ages, to a social necessity in the Enlightenment

The best books on **Morality Without God**, recommended by Mary Warnock (<https://fivebooks.com/best-books/mary-warnock-godless-morality/>)

Which comes first, morality or religion? And what happens when religious dogma clashes with the morality it purports to uphold? British philosopher Mary Warnock recommends the best books on morality without God.

The best books on **Honour**, recommended by Kwame Anthony Appiah (<https://fivebooks.com/best-books/kwame-anthony-appiah-on-honour/>)

The Princeton philosophy professor tells us about the meaning of honour, how it's won and lost, and what role it has played in the history of moral change

The best books on **Moral Philosophy**, recommended by Jonathan Glover (<https://fivebooks.com/best-books/moral-philosophy-jonathan-glover/>)

The questions of moral philosophy are not always best answered by philosophy books, says leading moral philosopher, Jonathan Glover. He explores questions of how we should live and by what values in books spanning across multiple genres.

The best books on **Virtue**, recommended by Edward Skidelsky (<https://fivebooks.com/best-books/virtue-edward-skidelsky/>)

British philosopher Edward Skidelsky tells us about virtue from Plato to the modern day, and says Jane Austen got it right when she wrote about passion

The best books on **Sin**, recommended by Paula Fredriksen (<https://fivebooks.com/best-books/paula-fredriksen-on-sin/>)

Tortured by the sins of your past? Or contemplating new ones? The historian of ancient Christianity recommends five books you to understand the role of sin in Christian thought.

The best books on **Being Good**, recommended by A C Grayling (<https://fivebooks.com/best-books/ac-grayling-being-good/>)

What does a moral life entail? How does one achieve it? Philosopher AC Grayling picks the best books on “being good.”

The best books on **Capital Punishment**, recommended by Clive Stafford Smith (<https://fivebooks.com/best-books/clive-stafford-smith-on-capital-punishment/>)

The lawyer, who’s defended many clients on death row, tells us why the legal system in capital cases is set up to fail, and says all of us should know more about what happens in an execution

The best books on **Torture**, recommended by Juan Mendez (<https://fivebooks.com/best-books/juan-mendez-on-torture/>)

Can torture ever be justified? No, says the UN special rapporteur, who tells us how torturers try to excuse themselves and what remedies should be available to surviving victims

The best books on **Censorship**, recommended by Anthony Julius (<https://fivebooks.com/best-books/anthony-julius-on-censorship/>)

As both a solicitor advocate and literary scholar, Anthony Julius occupies a privileged place to navigate complex interactions between literature and law. He picks the best books on censorship, including three novels subjected to their own censorship controversies.

The best books on **Climate Justice**, recommended by Mary Robinson (<https://fivebooks.com/best-books/climate-justice-mary-robinson/>)

The former United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and President of Ireland picks the best books to read on climate justice.

The best books on **Liberty and Morality**, recommended by Peter Berkowitz (<https://fivebooks.com/best-books/peter-berkowitz-on-liberty-and-morality/>)

The Hoover Institution scholar explores five books that he believes teach us something about how we are “failing to understand, appreciate and defend our liberty”

The best books on **Violence and Torture**, recommended by Darius Rejali (<https://fivebooks.com/best-books/darius-rejali-on-violence/>)

The author of *Torture and Democracy* gives a harrowing interview on the effects of violence, torture and trauma on the human being, ‘torture has a slippery slope and once you authorise it, it rapidly runs out of control’

The best books on **Evil**, recommended by Adam Haslett (<https://fivebooks.com/best-books/adam-haslett-on-evil/>)

Bestselling author, Adam Haslett, defines the existential origin of evil as the refusal to acknowledge and confront our own mortality. He picks the best books on evil.

The best books on **Ethics in Public Life**, recommended by Alex Carlile (<https://fivebooks.com/best-books/alex-carlile-on-ethics-in-public-life/>)

The Lib Dem peer says that reading Cicero's speeches, George Eliot's novels and Gerard Manley Hopkins's poems can help us manage the ethical dilemmas of our own historical moment, and provide clues to human nature

The best books on **Assassination**, recommended by Lindsay Porter (<https://fivebooks.com/best-books/assassination-lindsay-porter/>)

Lindsay Porter, author and cultural historian who has published widely on conspiracy theories, discusses five books on the different concepts of politically motivated killing and asks whether assassination can ever be justified

Aleksandar Hemon on **Man's Inhumanity to Man** (<https://fivebooks.com/best-books/aleksandar-hemon-man-inhumanity-man/>)

When reading books, we often empathize with a main character and find redemption in our emotional response to their fate. But it's more important to think, says Bosnian novelist Aleksandar Hemon. Here, he picks the best books on 'man's inhumanity to man.'

The best books on **Body Shopping**, recommended by Donna Dickenson (<https://fivebooks.com/best-books/donna-dickenson-on-body-shopping/>)

The author and activist talks about medical ethics and selects her five top books on the subject. She raises questions as to whether we own our bodies, and the ethics behind selling human organs.

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