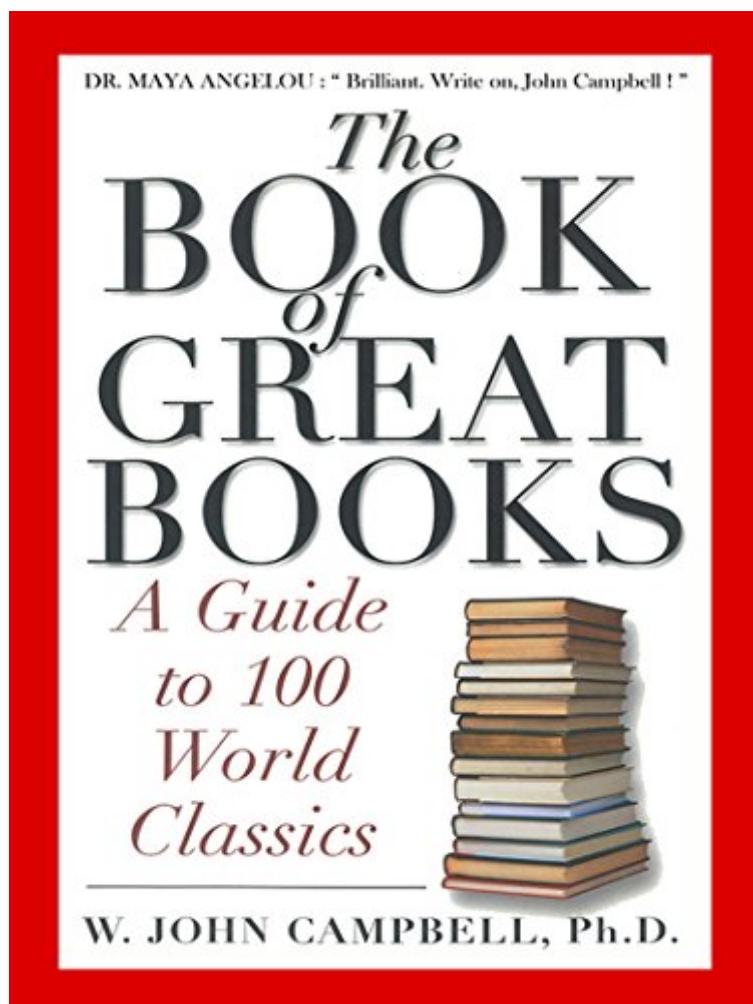


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The Book Of Great Books: A Guide To 100 World Classics



Synopsis

Dr. MAYA ANGELOU has said about this book: "Brilliant! Write on, John Campbell." The book analyzes 100 of the world's great books by focusing intensely on the plot, characters, style, social trends of the period in which each book was written, and so on. It has sold more than one million copies and its readers include students of all ages and their parents: lawyers, doctors, mathematicians, teachers of English & World literature, scientists, gaming programmers, and readers of every cultural and ethnic background who seek to know more about 100 of the world's most important books. Future volumes will contain different works from many countries around the world. The New York Times wrote that "The Book of Great Books unlocks the secrets to 100 of the world's most enduring novels, plays, and epic poems. Encompassing great works by authors from Homer to Hemingway and from Machiavelli to Toni Morrison, this book will guide you through the plot twists, major themes, and key details that make these classics so enduringly classic." The Book of Great Books is a treasure trove of information. Entries provide you with a thumbnail of historical background, the story's main themes and symbols, insights into the language and style of the work, critical perspectives, and a remarkably handy character diagram that clarifies the relationships among the characters. High comedy, foul murder, political intrigue, and the world's greatest love storiesâ "the pantheon of great works is yours to enjoy with this volume that makes great writing more accessible. 866 pages

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Customer Reviews

FACT: Each book is summarized and analyzed by sections. The author summarizes the action in a chapter-by-chapter Plot Summary, which ends with a very useful Character Chart schematic thingie that makes character relationships crystal clear. (Why isn't anyone else using this kind of chart?) Background section covers type of work (epic poem, adventure novel, etc.), author's background, setting. Key Characters section gives a couple sentence overview of each. Main Themes & Ideas section has a paragraph on each theme, and in my opinion this is the most useful part in aiding understanding of each analysis. Main Symbols: self-explanatory. Style & Structure section analyzes and evaluates other literary elements of the work: language, tone, irony, figures of speech such as metaphor and simile, foreshadowing, plot and composition. Critical Overview covers the relationship of the work to the society and time from which it emerged or how critics and readers react to the work's main ideas. Each book critique is about 8 pages long. It addresses mostly the works of "classic" authors--shakespeare, conrad, virgil, homer, chaucer, miller, milton, dante, tolkien, hemingway, ibsen, dickens, swift, steinbeck, orwell, melville, austen, camus, c. bronte, hawthorne, shelley, twain, wharton--yet there are a few post-modern works too--Joy Luck Club, The Bluest Eye, Caged Bird Sings, Color Purple. OPINION: This wonderful book deserves much more attention than it's gotten. More than just a plot summary, it's a very useful and fast guide to literary analysis and evaluation of some major Western Civilization literary works, and it would serve any high school or college student well. My sole complaint is that it only covers 100 Great Books. Desperate Comp. I and II students will love this (hint-hint!)

If there is one thing that is almost as good as a great book, it is a book about a great book or, in this case, great books. For those who love the classics, this is a fantastic and accessible resource. This book is quite a handy source for anyone who is taking a literature course in college or handling the classics in high school English. While not a substitute for the actual reading of the classic, this book provides a great overview of many important novels and keys in on literary aspects within the novels. There are a wide range of classics included within the volume. Here are a few examples: Aeneid, The Odyssey, Hamlet, Doctor Faustus, Crime and Punishment, Jane Eyre, Great Expectations, The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, Animal Farm, The Sun Also Rises, The Joy Luck Club, Death of a Salesman, The Bluest Eye. The novels and plays encompass many different

eras and types. For each work discussed, there are various points discussed and evaluated. Background information about the work is given, which is followed by a general summary for various sections of the book, where plot details are given. This is followed by a listing of key characters, with an explanation of their significance or role in the story. Themes central to the work are discussed, symbols are presented, and the author's style is chronicled. Finally, the book's context is put into perspective in a brief critical overview. The book's structure makes for an easy source to pick up and reference. A struggling student could use this book as they read one of the classics, referring to it often after reading sections or chapters.

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