

60 Books for 60

A curated reading list for a milestone year — organized for range, quality, and growth.

Pace: 60 books / 52 weeks $\approx$ 1.15 books/week, or 5 books/month. Roughly a third fiction-heavy months, a third nonfiction-heavy.

Literary & Historical Fiction (10)

Immersive, prize-caliber storytelling — different eras, geographies, and emotional textures so no two feel alike.

1. **A Gentleman in Moscow** — Amor Towles
2. **The Covenant of Water** — Abraham Verghese
3. **The Poisonwood Bible** — Barbara Kingsolver
4. **Pachinko** — Min Jin Lee
5. **The Book Thief** — Markus Zusak
6. **The Kite Runner** — Khaled Hosseini
7. **A Fine Balance** — Rohinton Mistry
8. **Lonesome Dove** — Larry McMurtry
9. **Demon Copperhead** — Barbara Kingsolver
10. **The Goldfinch** — Donna Tartt

Classic Literature (4)

The foundational shelf — books that shaped everything after them.

11. **East of Eden** — John Steinbeck
12. **The Great Gatsby** — F. Scott Fitzgerald
13. **The Count of Monte Cristo** — Alexandre Dumas
14. **The Remains of the Day** — Kazuo Ishiguro

Contemporary & Book Club Fiction (8)

Voice-driven, conversation-starting novels — the ones people are talking about right now.

15. **James** — Percival Everett
16. **A Little Life** — Hanya Yanagihara
17. **The Bee Sting** — Paul Murray
18. **Beartown** — Fredrik Backman
19. **A Man Called Ove** — Fredrik Backman
20. **The Vanishing Half** — Brit Bennett
21. **Black Cake** — Charmaine Wilkerson
22. **Theo of Golden** — Allen Levi

Mystery, Thriller & Psychological Suspense (5)

Plot engines — pace and twists that pair well between heavier reads.

23. **Gone Girl** — Gillian Flynn
24. **The Silent Patient** — Alex Michaelides

- 25. **Anxious People** — *Fredrik Backman*
- 26. **Eleanor Oliphant Is Completely Fine** — *Gail Honeyman*
- 27. **Whistler** — *Ann Patchett*

Mythology, Sci-Fi & Speculative Fiction (3)

A change of register — myth reimagined and hard science pushed to its edges.

- 28. **Circe** — *Madeline Miller*
- 29. **Project Hail Mary** — *Andy Weir*
- 30. **Dune** — *Frank Herbert*

Memoir & True Story (3)

Real lives, told with craft — perspective-widening rather than plot-driven.

- 31. **Educated** — *Tara Westover*
- 32. **The Happiest Man on Earth** — *Eddie Jaku*
- 33. **Family of Spies** — *Pete Earley*

Psychology & Self-Understanding (6)

How minds — yours and others' — actually work.

- 34. **Maybe You Should Talk to Someone** — *Lori Gottlieb*
- 35. **The Body Keeps the Score** — *Bessel van der Kolk*
- 36. **Games People Play** — *Eric Berne*
- 37. **Influence: The Psychology of Persuasion** — *Robert Cialdini*
- 38. **The Organized Mind** — *Daniel Levitin*
- 39. **Thinking in Systems** — *Donella Meadows*

Philosophy, Stoicism & Wisdom (5)

Frameworks for meaning, resilience, and how to hold difficulty well.

- 40. **The Little Book of Stoicism** — *Jonas Salzgeber*
- 41. **The Road Less Traveled** — *M. Scott Peck*
- 42. **When Things Fall Apart** — *Pema Chödrön*
- 43. **The Four Agreements** — *Don Miguel Ruiz*
- 44. **The Alchemist** — *Paulo Coelho*

Leadership & Influence (5)

People skills and power dynamics — for the professional side of the year.

- 45. **How the Best Leaders Lead** — *Brian Tracy*
- 46. **12 Rules for Life** — *Jordan B. Peterson*
- 47. **48 Laws of Power** — *Robert Greene*
- 48. **How to Work with Complicated People** — *Ryan Leak*
- 49. **Magic Words** — *Jonah Berger*

Habits, Focus & Productivity (5)

Practical systems for attention and discipline.

50. **Atomic Habits** — *James Clear*
51. **Deep Work** — *Cal Newport*
52. **Essentialism** — *Greg McKeown*
53. **The Obstacle Is the Way** — *Ryan Holiday*
54. **Mind Management, Not Time Management** — *David Kadavy*

Health & Wellness (3)

The physical foundation underneath everything else on this list.

55. **Why We Sleep** — *Matthew Walker*
56. **Breath** — *James Nestor*
57. **Own the Day, Own Your Life** — *Aubrey Marcus*

Money & Lifestyle (2)

A grounded look at wealth and generosity.

58. **The Psychology of Money** — *Morgan Housel*
59. **Unreasonable Hospitality** — *Will Guidara*

Milestone Year (1)

Written for exactly this moment.

60. **The 60-Something Crisis** — *Barbara L. Pagano*

What I left off, and why

- Overlap trims: kept one Hosseini (*The Kite Runner* over *A Thousand Splendid Suns*), one WWII-era novel (*The Book Thief* over *The Nightingale*), one Backman family drama (*A Man Called Ove* and *Beartown* kept, but not all four of his books), and didn't double up on grief-and-secrets book-club novels beyond the eight chosen.
- Redundant self-help: several titles on the original list cover ground already well-served by a stronger pick in the same lane (e.g., *The Art of Spending Money* vs. *The Psychology of Money*; *The Art of People* / *The Coaching Habit* vs. *Magic Words and How the Best Leaders Lead*; *The Art of Impossible* / *A Life Less Stressed* vs. *Deep Work*/*Essentialism* and *Breath*/*Why We Sleep*).
- Unclear titles: a few entries (*YesterYear*, *Lost Lambs*, *Where the Wildflowers Grow*, *The Midnight Train*, *So Old So Young*, *Lemon Trees Grow*, *The Sirens Call*, *Counter Clockwise*) couldn't be confidently identified or vouched for quality-wise, so they were left out rather than guessed.
- Genre-fit calls: dropped the YA series (*Inheritance Games*), a couple of straightforward genre thrillers (*The Widow*, *Rock Paper Scissors*) and one Christian-fiction title (*When Crickets Cry*) to keep the fiction slate more literary and varied.
- Update: *Theo of Golden* (Allen Levi) was added to Contemporary/Book Club Fiction — a #1 NYT bestseller about an elderly stranger's quiet campaign of generosity in a small Southern town, and a strong thematic fit for a milestone year. It replaced *Frozen River*. *Whistler* was added to Mystery/Thriller since it was already in progress, replacing *We Need to Talk About Kevin* to keep that category lighter in tone.