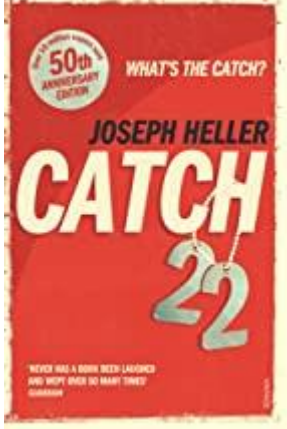
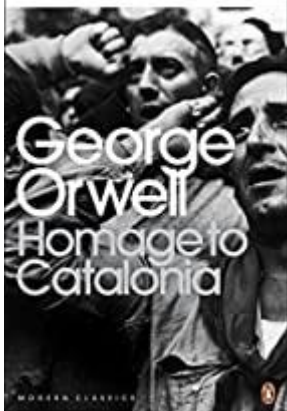

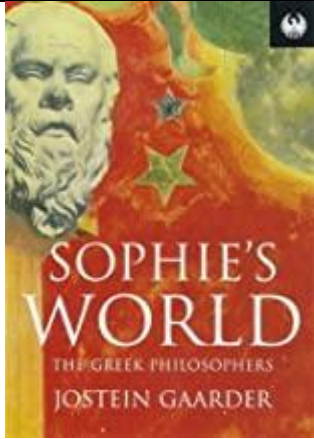


Book Cover	Book Title and Author	Blurb	Reason for choice
	<p>Zen and The Art of Motorcycle Maintenance – Robert Pirsig</p>	<p>An odyssey into life's challenging philosophical questions during an unforgettable summer motorcycle trip, <i>Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance</i> transformed a generation and continues to inspire millions.</p> <p>One of the most influential books written in the past half-century, Robert Pirsig's <i>Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance</i> is a powerful examination of how we live and a breathtaking meditation on how to live better. Following a father and his young son on a summer motorcycle trip across America's Northwest, to complete the Chautauqua spiritual journey, it is a story of love, fear, growth, discovery and acceptance. Both personal and philosophical, it is a compelling study of relationships, values, and eventually, enlightenment and meaning – resonant with the confusions and wonders of existence.</p> <p>Acclaimed as one of the most exciting books in the history of American letters, this modern epic became an instant</p>	<p>A book that I have read at least half a dozen times and one that I keep returning to. Each time I read it, I take something different from it. This book discusses so many different ideas with regards to friendship, relationships and the meaning of life. It is over 40 years old but its themes are still relevant today</p>

		bestseller upon publication in 1974.	
	<p>Catch 22 – Joseph Heller</p>	<p>Explosive, subversive, wild and funny, 50 years on the novel's strength is undiminished. Reading Joseph Heller's classic satire is nothing less than a rite of passage.</p> <p>Set in the closing months of World War II, this is the story of a bombardier named Yossarian who is frantic and furious because thousands of people he has never met are trying to kill him. His real problem is not the enemy - it is his own army which keeps increasing the number of missions the men must fly to complete their service. If Yossarian makes any attempts to excuse himself from the perilous missions then he is caught in Catch-22: if he flies he is crazy, and doesn't have to; but if he doesn't want to he must be sane and has to. That's some catch...</p>	<p>This is a book that I put off reading for a long time – I can't remember why. I eventually got around to reading it whilst flying to my friend's wedding. I read the whole book in one sitting and it was without doubt the funniest book that I have ever read – I even found myself laughing out loud at times. I have never returned to this book for fear that I wouldn't enjoy it as much the second time around.</p>
	<p>A Homage to Catalonia – George Orwell</p>	<p>'Every line of serious work that I have written since 1936 has been written, directly or indirectly, <i>against</i> totalitarianism and <i>for</i> democratic Socialism as I understand it'. Thus wrote Orwell following his experiences as a militiaman in the</p>	<p>George Orwell is one of my favourite authors – I could have included 'Down and Out in Paris and London' or 'The Road to Wigan Pier' but I would probably place this slightly above the other two. It is quite a while since I read this book but I recall the</p>

		<p>Spanish Civil War, chronicled in <i>Homage to Catalonia</i>. Here he brings to bear all the force of his humanity, passion and clarity, describing with bitter intensity the bright hopes and cynical betrayals of that chaotic episode: the revolutionary euphoria of Barcelona, the courage of ordinary Spanish men and women he fought alongside, the terror and confusion of the front, his near-fatal bullet wound and the vicious treachery of his supposed allies.</p>	<p>poignant way that Orwell describes the conditions and attitudes of those fighting during the Spanish Civil War.</p>
	<p>Roads to Freedom Trilogy – Jean Paul Sartre</p>	<p>The first volume in his <i>Roads to Freedom</i> trilogy, Jean-Paul Sartre's <i>The Age of Reason</i> is a philosophical novel exploring existentialist notions of freedom, translated by Eric Sutton with an introduction by David Caute in Penguin Modern Classics.</p> <p>Set in the volatile Paris summer of 1938, <i>The Age of Reason</i> follows two days in the life of Mathieu Delarue, a philosophy teacher, and his circle in the cafés and bars of Montparnasse. Mathieu has so far managed to contain sex and personal freedom in conveniently separate compartments. But now he is in trouble, urgently trying to</p>	<p>A bit of a cheat as I have plumped for a trilogy (with a fourth book published posthumously) – I don't think I could narrow it down to one of the three (or four) as they form a complete narrative. It is hard to talk about Sartre without sounding pretentious, but within this trilogy he discusses the notions of freedom, responsibility and duty in the shadow of World War Two. A really thought provoking series of books.</p>

		<p>raise 4,000 francs to procure a safe abortion for his mistress, Marcelle. Beyond all this, filtering an uneasy light on his predicament, rises the distant threat of the coming of the Second World War.</p>	
	<p>For Whom the Bell Tolls – Ernest Hemingway</p>	<p><i>One of the greatest novels of the 20th century by one of the greatest writers in American history</i></p> <p>High in the pine forests of the Spanish Sierra, a guerrilla band prepares to blow up a vital bridge.</p> <p>Robert Jordan, a young American volunteer on the republican side of the Spanish Civil War, has been sent to handle the dynamiting.</p> <p>There, in the mountains, he finds the dangers and the intense comradeship of war. And there he discovers Maria, a young woman who has escaped from Franco's rebels. It is in these desperate days that his fate will be set.</p>	<p>Another book written about the Spanish Civil War by another of my favourite authors – I could have easily chosen 'A Farewell to Arms' or 'The Old Man of the Sea'. Hemingway presents a more romantic version of the war told through the eyes of a young American volunteer.</p>

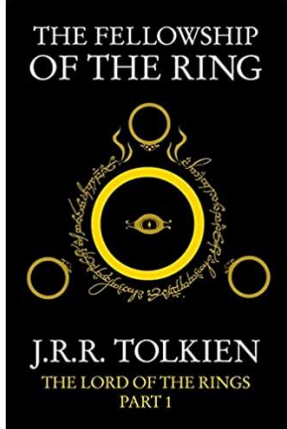


Sophie's World
– Jostein
Gaarder

When 14-year-old Sophie encounters a mysterious mentor who introduces her to philosophy, mysteries deepen in her own life. Why does she keep getting postcards addressed to another girl? Who is the other girl? And who, for that matter, is Sophie herself? To solve the riddle, she uses her new knowledge of philosophy, but the truth is far stranger than she could have imagined.

An addictive blend of mystery, philosophy and fantasy, *Sophie's World* is an international phenomenon which has been translated into 60 languages and sold more than 40 million copies.

An interesting book that introduces the works of famous philosophers through a story written about a girl and her father. A very easy book to read and another that I have returned to more than once. I think I first read this book not long after finishing university and having read it, it introduced me to ideas that I would explore in a number of other books in this list.

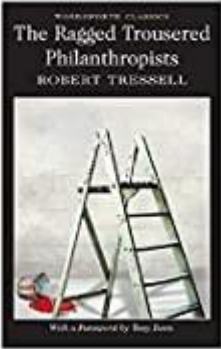


The Lord of The
Rings – J.R.R.
Tolkien

Continuing the story begun in *The Hobbit*, this is the first part of Tolkien's epic masterpiece, *The Lord of the Rings*, featuring a striking black cover based on Tolkien's own design, the definitive text, and a detailed map of Middle-earth.

Sauron, the Dark Lord, has gathered to him all the Rings of Power – the means by which he intends to rule Middle-earth. All he lacks in his plans for dominion is the One Ring – the ring that rules them all – which has fallen

I think people generally either love or hate this book. I read it whilst at school and was completely captivated by it. An epic tale, which describes the battle between good and evil – I am looking forward to being able to introduce my son to this book (I just hope he likes it to!)

		<p>into the hands of the hobbit, Bilbo Baggins.</p> <p>In a sleepy village in the Shire, young Frodo Baggins finds himself faced with an immense task, as his elderly cousin Bilbo entrusts the Ring to his care. Frodo must leave his home and make a perilous journey across Middle-earth to the Cracks of Doom, there to destroy the Ring and foil the Dark Lord in his evil purpose.</p>	
	<p>The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists – Robert Tressell</p>	<p><i>The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists</i> is a classic representation of the impoverished and politically powerless underclass of British society in Edwardian England, ruthlessly exploited by the institutionalized corruption of their employers and the civic and religious authorities. Epic in scale, the novel charts the ruinous effects of the laissez-faire mercantilist ethics on the men, women, and children of the working classes, and through its emblematic characters, argues for a socialist politics as the only hope for a civilized and humane life for all. This Wordsworth edition includes an exclusive foreword by the late Tony Benn.</p>	<p>I came to this book quite late, only getting around to reading it a couple of years ago. Despite being written in 1914, the themes discussed still seem as relevant today. In a similar vein to Orwell, Tressell’s accurate description of the working and living conditions of the working classes and the ruthless and exploitative practices adopted by their employers makes you stop and reflect.</p>



The Thousand Autumns of Jacob de Zoet – David Mitchell

Be transported to a place like no other: a tiny, man-made island in the bay of Nagasaki, for two hundred years the sole gateway between Japan and the West. Here, in the dying days of the 18th-century, a young Dutch clerk arrives to make his fortune. Instead he loses his heart.

Step onto the streets of Dejima and mingle with scheming traders, spies, interpreters, servants and concubines as two cultures converge. In a tale of integrity and corruption, passion and power, the key is control - of riches and minds, and over death itself.

David Mitchell is probably my favourite contemporary author. I first read 'Cloud Atlas' and then worked through his other works. I am very much looking forward to his latest book 'Utopia Avenue' which is released in July. This is a historical novel, and is set in Japan, like a number of Mitchell's books but contains a number of twists.



The Glass Bead Game – Herman Hesse

In the remote Kingdom of Castalia, the scholars of the Twenty Third century play the Glass Bead Game. The elaborately coded game is a fusion of all human knowledge - of maths, music, philosophy, science, and art. Intrigued as a school boy, Joseph Knecht becomes consumed with mastering the game as an adult. As Knecht fulfils his life-long quest he must contend with unexpected dilemmas and the longing for a life beyond the ivory tower.

This is another 'place' book for me. I read this book while driving from Darwin to Alice Springs, travelling on a bus. It was a long journey but the time flew as I was engrossed in this book. This was the first book that I had read by Hesse but it led me on to others such as 'Siddhartha' and 'Demian'. A very easy book to read but thought provoking nonetheless.

