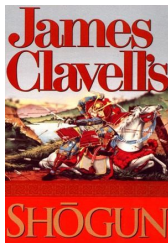
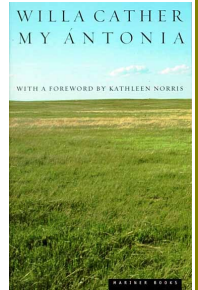


Historical Fiction

Classic Literature

My Antonia by Willa Cather

An unconventional novel of prairie life, *My Antonia* tells the story of a remarkable woman whose strength and passion epitomize the pioneer spirit. Antonia Shimerda returns to Black Hawk, Nebraska, to make a fresh start after eloping with a railway conductor following the tragic death of her father. Accustomed to living in a sod house and toiling alongside the men in the fields, she is unprepared for the lecherous reaction her lush sensuality provokes when she moves to the city. Despite betrayal and crushing opposition, Antonia steadfastly pursues her quest for happiness—a moving struggle that mirrors the quiet drama of the American landscape.

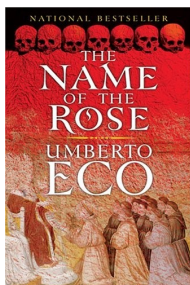
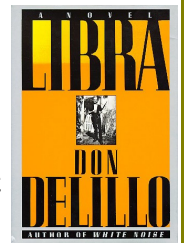


Shogun by James Clavell

The name Clavell is synonymous with lengthy, exotic historical adventure. In the first novel in his Asian Saga, Elizabethan trader John Blackthorne gets shipwrecked off the Japanese coast. He sheds his "western barbarian" ways as he absorbs the language and local customs, and a powerful feudal lord teaches him the samurai tradition. Both shocking and stunning in its depiction of Japanese culture, *Shogun* evokes a defining time in Japan's history: when its borders first opened to western trade.

Libra by Don DeLillo

Did Lee Harvey Oswald act alone in assassinating President John F. Kennedy? In his ninth novel, DeLillo addresses this question, skillfully weaving together fact and fiction to create an engrossing tale. It is a measure of his success that while reading, one must keep reminding oneself that this is, indeed, a novel making "no claim to literal truth." DeLillo's vision is not of a single, perfectly working scheme but rather of "a rambling affair that succeeded in short term mainly due to chance." The cast, both real and fictional, ranges from scheming CIA agents to Mafia dons, but what haunts the reader most is the image of Oswald as a confused young man searching for an identity and accidentally caught up in something bigger than himself.

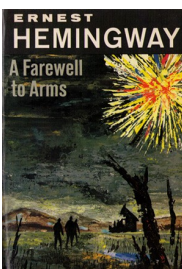
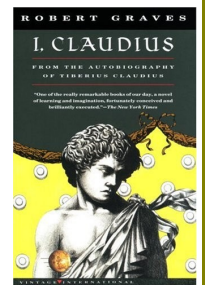


The Name of the Rose by Umberto Eco

In 1327, Brother William of Baskerville is sent to investigate possible heresy at an Italian monastery. While there, he confronts the sinister deaths of seven Franciscan monks. His investigations—which combine straightforward logic with detailed explorations of medieval philosophy, arcane Church history, and the secrets of the monastery's labyrinth—are anything but simple. Both intellectual feast and popular entertainment, this international best seller gave rise to a new fiction subgenre: the literary thriller.

I, Claudius by Robert Graves

Having never seen the famous 1970s television series based on Graves' historical novel of ancient Rome and being generally uneducated about matters both ancient and Roman, I wasn't prepared for such an engaging book. But it's a ripping good read, this fictional autobiography set in the Roman Empire's days of glory and decadence. As a history lesson, it's fabulous; as a novel it's also wonderful. Best is Claudius himself, the stutterer who let everyone think he was an idiot (to avoid getting poisoned) but who reveals himself in the narrative to be a wry and likable observer. His story continues in *Claudius the God*.



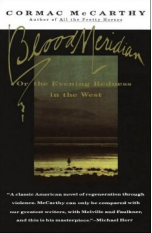
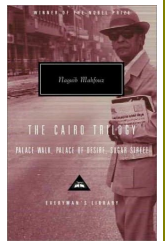
A Farewell to Arms by Ernest Hemingway

In 1918 Ernest Hemingway went to war, to the 'war to end all wars'. He volunteered for ambulance service in Italy, was wounded and twice decorated. Out of his experiences came *A Farewell to Arms*. Hemingway's description of war is unforgettable. He recreates the fear, the comradeship, the courage of his young American volunteer and the men and women he meets in Italy with total conviction. But *A Farewell to Arms* is not only a novel of war. In it Hemingway has also created a love story of immense drama and uncompromising passion.



[The Cairo Trilogy](#) by Naguib Mahfouz

Naguib Mahfouz's magnificent epic trilogy of colonial Egypt appears here in one volume for the first time. The Nobel Prize—winning writer's masterwork is the engrossing story of a Muslim family in Cairo during Britain's occupation of Egypt in the early decades of the twentieth century. The novels of The Cairo Trilogy trace three generations of the family of tyrannical patriarch Al-Sayyid Ahmad Abd al-Jawad, who rules his household with a strict hand while living a secret life of self-indulgence. Palace Walk introduces us to his gentle, oppressed wife, Amina, his cloistered daughters, Aisha and Khadija, and his three sons—the tragic and idealistic Fahmy, the dissolute hedonist Yasin, and the soul-searching intellectual Kamal.

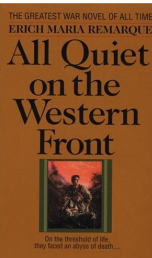
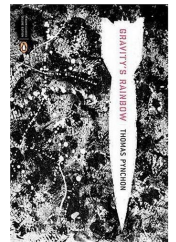


[Blood Meridian](#) by Cormac McCarthy

Cormac McCarthy's masterwork, Blood Meridian, chronicles the brutal world of the Texas-Mexico borderlands in the mid-nineteenth century. Its wounded hero, the teenage Kid, must confront the extraordinary violence of the Glanton gang, a murderous cadre on an official mission to scalp Indians and sell those scalps. Loosely based on fact, the novel represents a genius vision of the historical West, one so fiercely realized that since its initial publication in 1985 the canon of American literature has welcomed Blood Meridian to its shelf.

[Gravity's Rainbow](#) by Thomas Pynchon

Tyrone Slothrop, a GI in London in 1944, has a big problem. Whenever he gets an erection, a Blitz bomb hits. Slothrop gets excited, and then "a screaming comes across the sky," heralding an angel of death, a V-2 rocket. The novel's title, Gravity's Rainbow, refers to the rocket's vapor arc, a cruel dark parody of what God sent Noah to symbolize his promise never to destroy humanity again. Slothrop's father was an unwitting part of the cosmic doublecross. To provide for the boy's future Harvard education, he took cash from the mad German scientist Laszlo Jamf, who performed Pavlovian experiments on the infant Tyrone. Laszlo invented Imipolex G, a new plastic useful in rocket insulation, and conditioned Tyrone's privates to respond to its presence. Now the grown-up Tyrone helplessly senses the Imipolex G in incoming V-2s, and his military superiors are investigating him. Soon he is on the run from legions of bizarre enemies through the phantasmagoric horrors of WWII Germany.

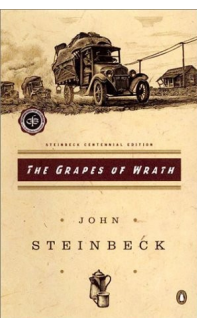
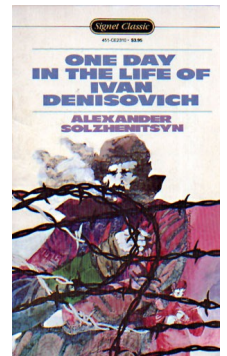


[All Quiet on the Western Front](#) by Erich Maria Remarque

Probably the most famous anti-war novel ever written. The story is told by a young 'unknown soldier' in the trenches of Flanders during the First World War. Through his eyes we see all the realities of war; under fire, on patrol, waiting in the trenches, at home on leave, and in hospitals and dressing stations. Although there are vividly described incidents which remain in mind, there is no sense of adventure here, only the feeling of youth betrayed and a deceptively simple indictment of war - of any war - told for a whole generation of victims.

[One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich](#) by Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn

Solzhenitsyn's first book, this economical, relentless novel is one of the most forceful artistic indictments of political oppression in the Stalin-era Soviet Union. The simply told story of a typical, grueling day of the titular character's life in a labor camp in Siberia, is a modern classic of Russian literature and quickly cemented Solzhenitsyn's international reputation upon publication in 1962. It is painfully apparent that Solzhenitsyn himself spent time in the gulags--he was imprisoned for nearly a decade as punishment for making derogatory statements about Stalin in a letter to a friend.



[The Grapes of Wrath](#) by John Steinbeck

Set during the Great Depression, it traces the migration of an Oklahoma Dust Bowl family to California and their subsequent hardships as migrant farm workers. It won a Pulitzer Prize in 1940. The work did much to publicize the injustices of migrant labor. The narrative, interrupted by prose-poem interludes, chronicles the struggles of the Joad family's life on a failing Oklahoma farm, their difficult journey to California, and their disillusionment once they arrive there and fall prey to a parasitic economic system. The insularity of the Joads--Ma's obsession with family togetherness, son Tom's self-centeredness, and daughter Rose of Sharon's materialism--ultimately gives way to a sense of universal community.

[War and Peace](#) by Leo Tolstoy

War and Peace broadly focuses on Napoleon's invasion of Russia in 1812 and follows three of the most well-known characters in literature: Pierre Bezukhov, the illegitimate son of a count who is fighting for his inheritance and yearning for spiritual fulfillment; Prince Andrei Bolkonsky, who leaves his family behind to fight in the war against Napoleon; and Natasha Rostov, the beautiful young daughter of a nobleman who intrigues both men. As Napoleon's army invades, Tolstoy brilliantly follows characters from diverse backgrounds—peasants and nobility, civilians and soldiers—as they struggle with the problems unique to their era, their history, and their culture.

