



The Launch Reading List

Fiction: light

Author	Title	Description
Adams, Richard	Watership Down	An Aeneid-like adventure novel of anthropomorphized rabbits in England trying to survive after the destruction of their home.
Boulle, Pierre	Bridge Over the River Kwai, The	Novel dealing with British soldiers in a Japanese POW camp during World War 2 and the ways they resist their capturers.
Bradbury, Ray	Fahrenheit 451	Dystopian novel about a future America where books are outlawed and "firemen" burn any that are found. One of Bradbury's best books.
Christie, Agatha	And Then There Were None	Detective fiction novel about 10 people, previously complicit in the deaths of others but having escaped notice and/or punishment, and who are tricked onto an island and each mysteriously murdered one by one.
Christie, Agatha	Curtain	Detective novel in which all the characters and the murder itself are set in one country house.
Christie, Agatha	Murder of Roger Ackroyd	One of Christie's masterpiece detective novels. The way the book ends has left an impact on the genre of crime novels.
Christie, Agatha	Murder on the Orient Express	Detective fiction novel about a detective's attempts to solve a murder that occurs on the train he's riding through the Middle-East back to Europe.
Crichton, Michael	Andromeda Strain, The	Thriller novel documenting the efforts of a team of scientists investigating a deadly extraterrestrial microorganism which rapidly and fatally clots human blood, while inducing insanity in some people.
De Wohl, Louis	St. Joan: The Girl Soldier	Historical novel about Joan of Arc.
Defoe, Daniel	Robinson Crusoe	Excellent story of a ship-wrecked Englishman and his struggle with basic survival, native savages, and the meaning and reason behind his solitary existence.
Doyle, Sir Arthur Conan	The Hound of the Baskervilles	Detective novel featuring Sherlock Holmes. Tells the story of an attempted murder inspired by the legend of a fearsome, diabolical hound of supernatural origin.
Doyle, Sir Arthur Conan	Complete Sherlock Holmes, The	Stories about the brilliant detective Holmes, who is famous for his intellectual prowess and is renowned for his skillful use of astute observation, deductive reasoning and forensic skills to solve difficult cases.
Gilbreth, Frank	Cheaper by the Dozen	Biographical novel about a couple and their twelve children
Lewis, C.S.	Space Trilogy, The: Volume 1: Out of the Silent Planet	Part 1 of gripping trilogy. Deals with what Lewis saw as the dehumanizing trends in contemporary science fiction.



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Author	Title	Description
Lewis, C.S.	Space Trilogy, The: Volume 2: Perelandra	Part 2 of gripping trilogy. Deals with what Lewis saw as the de-humanizing trends in contemporary science fiction.
Lewis, C.S.	Space Trilogy, The: Volume 3: That Hideous Strength	Part 3 of gripping trilogy. Deals with what Lewis saw as the de-humanizing trends in contemporary science fiction.
London, Jack	Call of the Wild, The	Story about a St. Bernard-Scotch Collie dog in the Yukon Territory in the 1890s, the mistreatment it gets, and the good owner it eventually gets.
London, Jack	White Fang	Tells the story of a wild wolfdog's journey to domestication in the Yukon Territory in the 1890s.
McLean, Alistair	Guns of Navarrone, The	The story concerns the efforts of an Allied commando team to destroy a seemingly impregnable German fortress that threatens Allied naval ships in the Aegean Sea, and prevents over 1,200 isolated British troops from being rescued. The story is based on the real events surrounding the Battle of Leros in World War II.
McLean, Alistair	H.M.S. Ulysses	Novel about a British light cruiser's battle against German U-boats as it attempts to escort a convoy of ships to Murmansk.
Moody, Ralph	Little Britches: Father and I Were Ranchers (and series)	Autobiographical account of a family's move from the East coast to the West (Colorado) in the early 20 th century and the struggles they face.
Orczy, Baroness	Scarlet Pimpernel, The	Novel about an English aristocrat who pretends to be a weak foppish figure but in reality saves French noblemen from the French Revolution's guillotine.
Sabatini, Rafael	Captain blood	Story of the adventures of Peter Blood: doctor, prisoner, pirate, hero.
Sienkiewicz, Henryk	Trilogy—Part 1: With Fire and Sword	Phenomenal epic novel (part 1 of 3) about war and heroism in the glory days of 17 th century Poland.
Sienkiewicz, Henryk	Trilogy—Part 2: The Deluge	Phenomenal epic novel (part 2 of 3) about war and heroism in the glory days of 17 th century Poland.
Sienkiewicz, Henryk	Trilogy—Part 3: Fire in the Steppe	Phenomenal epic novel (part 3 of 3) about war and heroism in the glory days of 17 th century Poland.
Stevenson, Robert L	Treasure Island	Story of a boy and how he gets caught up in a race against pirates to find a hidden treasure.
Twain, Mark	Tom Sawyer	Classic story of a boy's life in a Mississippi river town in 19 th century America.
Verne, Jules	Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea	Adventure story of exploring the depths of the ocean.
White, Terence H.	The Once and Future King	A fantasy novel about King Arthur.
Wodehouse, P.G.	My Man Jeeves	One of many hilarious stories of the wealthy, scatterbrained Bertie Wooster, the improbable and unfortunate situations in which he finds himself, and the way his ingenuous valet Jeeves is always able to extricate them.



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Author	Title	Description
Wodehouse, P.G.	Right Ho, Jeeves	One of many hilarious stories of the wealthy, scatterbrained Bertie Wooster, the improbable and unfortunate situations in which he finds himself, and the way his ingenuous valet Jeeves is always able to extricate them.
Wren, P.C.	Beau Geste	Adventure novel about a British young man who joins the French foreign legion and fights in North Africa.

Fiction: historical

Author	Title	Description
Benson, Robert Hugh	Come Rack, Come Rope	Historical novel about Catholic martyrs in Elizabethan England, written by an English Catholic convert from Anglicanism.
Bowden	Black Hawk Down	Novel about the bloody fight of American troops against Somali warlords.
Cather, Willa	Death Comes for the Archbishop	Beautifully written fictional account of Bishop Lamy's task to set up a new diocese in Santa Fe after the Mexican-American War.
Roberts, Kenneth	Arundel	Good historical novel about life in America during early America.
Roberts, Kenneth	Rabble in Arms	Historical novel about Benedict Arnold and the American Revolutionary War.
Ryan, Cornelius	Bridge Too Far, A	Historical novel about the failed attempt to end the Second World War by Christmas 1944.
Ryan, Cornelius	Longest Day, The	Historical novel about D-Day, June 6, 1944.
Shaara, Michael	Killer Angels, The	Historical fiction account of the Battle of Gettysburg. Won the Pulitzer Prize, and called the best war narrative since Stephen Crane's Red Badge of Courage.
Sienkiewicz, Henryk	Quo Vadis	Historical account of the Nero, the early Christians, the burning of Rome, and the relationship between a young Roman soldier-aristocrat and a Christian girl.
Solzhenitsyn, Alexander	One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich	Novel set in a Soviet labor camp in the 1950s. Describes a single day in the life of an ordinary prisoner. It was the first work detailing Stalinist repression that was openly distributed.
Stevenson, Robert L	Black Arrow, The	An historical adventure novel and romance set during the Wars of the Roses.
Stevenson, Robert L	Kidnapped	A historical novel that tells of the boy David Balfour's pursuit of his inheritance and his alliance with Alan Breck in the intrigues of Jacobite troubles in Scotland.
Wallace, Lew	Ben-Hur	Novel set in the time of Christ. The central character is Judah, prince of the Hebrew house of Hur. Judah grows up in Jerusalem, during the turbulent years around the birth of Christ. His best friend is Messala, a Roman. As adults Judah and Messala become rivals, each hating the other, which leads to Judah's downfall and eventual triumph.



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Fiction: literary novel, etc.

Author	Title	Description
Austen, Jane	Persuasion	A young woman named Anne Elliot was persuaded not to marry a navy captain with no fortune, ancestry, or prospects, but when he returns home 7 years later she starts to believe in second chances.
Austen, Jane	Pride and Prejudice	Story of how a woman deals with issues of manners, morals, education, upbringing, and marriage in the society of landed gentry in early 19 th century England.
Austen, Jane	Sense and Sensibility	Work of romantic fiction about two sisters in England in the late 18 th century.
Benson, Robert Hugh	Lord of the World	Insightful and interesting apocalyptic novel.
Bolt, Robert	Man for all Seasons, A	Historical play about Thomas More's struggle to preserve law and truth against the tyranny of Henry VIII in making himself head of the Church in England, ending with the heroic martyrdom of More.
Cather, Willa	My Antonia	The final book of the prairie trilogy, about immigrant families moving to start new lives in Nebraska.
Cooper, James Fenimore	Last of the Mohicans, The	Historical adventure novel about the relationship between American settlers and different warring Indian tribes.
Crane, Stephen	Red Badge of Courage, The	Historical novel on the Civil War and one soldier's role in it.
Dante	Divine Comedy, The: Inferno, Purgatorio, Paradiso	One of the greatest works of literature in history, covering a trek through purgatory, hell, and heaven. Beautiful poetry infused with philosophical and theological thought.
Dickens, Charles	Christmas Carol, A	Story of sour and stingy Ebenezer Scrooge's ideological, ethical, and emotional transformation after the supernatural visitations of Jacob Marley and the Ghosts of Christmases Past, Present and Yet to Come.
Dickens, Charles	David Copperfield	Story of a boy who loses his parents at an early age, and who escapes the torture of working for his pitiless stepfather to try to make something of himself and, with any luck, find true happiness.
Dickens, Charles	Oliver Twist	Enjoyable classic from the pen of a great storyteller.
Dickens, Charles	Tale of Two Cities, A	Story of the plight of an innocent French aristocrat, his bride, her long-suffering father, and her loyal English caretaker as they are all caught up in the blood and death of the French Revolution.
Dostoyevsky, Fyodor	Brothers Karamazov, The	A fervent, philosophical novel that explores deep into the truths of God, free will, and morality. It tells the story of an intellectual Ivan, sensual Dmitri, and idealistic Alyosha Karamazov, who collide in the wake of their despicable father's brutal murder.
Dostoyevsky, Fyodor	Crime and Punishment	Classic study about conscience written by the great Russian writer: challenging but worthwhile.



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Author	Title	Description
Homer	Iliad, The	First great work of western literature. A truly epic poem detailing a cross-section of the Trojan War, with deep insights into man, virtue, and immortality.
Homer	Odyssey, The	Sequel to the Iliad, detailing the 10 year struggle for Odysseus to return home and save his wife and home from being taken by those who stayed behind from the Trojan War.
Lee, Harper	To Kill a Mockingbird	Classic novel of a lawyer in the Deep South defending a black man charged with the rape of a white girl.
NA	Beowulf	Medieval epic poem about the hero Beowulf's quest to save a people from a mythical monster. One of the major pieces of Old English literature.
Orwell, George	Animal Farm	Novel about animals who take over a farm; allegory of communism.
Shakespeare, William	Hamlet	The play, set in Denmark, recounts how Prince Hamlet exacts revenge on his uncle Claudius, who has murdered Hamlet's father, the King, and then taken the throne and married Gertrude, Hamlet's mother. The play vividly charts the course of real and feigned madness—from overwhelming grief to seething rage—and explores themes and various forms of moral corruption.
Shakespeare, William	Julius Caesar	It portrays the conspiracy against the Roman dictator of the same name, his assassination and its aftermath. Although the title of the play is Julius Caesar, Caesar is not the central character in its action; he appears in only three scenes, and is killed at the beginning of the third act. The protagonist of the play is Marcus Brutus, and the central psychological drama is his struggle between the conflicting demands of honor, patriotism, and friendship.
Shakespeare, William	King Lear	Tragedy of King Lear's failure to see which daughters and subjects are good and bad. The evil subjects revolt, and those loyal defend him. One of Shakespeare's greatest works.
Shakespeare, William	Macbeth	Tragedy in which Macbeth and his wife overthrow and murder King Duncan but later suffer retribution for their evil deeds.
Steinbeck, John	Pearl, The	Novella about a pearl diver, Kino, and explores man's nature as well as greed and evil.
Tolkien, JRR	Hobbit, The	Novel about Bilbo Baggins and how he comes into possession of the Ring of Power.
Tolkien, JRR	Lord of the Rings, The	Epic novel in the mythical world of Middle-Earth about the war and quest to defeat the forces of evil who seek to conquer all others.
Tolstoy, Leo	Anna Karenina	Greatest novel of Tolstoy, tells the story of 2 figures: the rebellious, sensual Anna and the self-doubting agnostic Levin and the struggle of both for fulfillment and happiness.
Tolstoy, Leo	Death of Ivan Ilyich	Novella about the death, at age 45, of a high-court judge in 19 th -century Russia. The story focuses on how this man, who did not lead a good life, comes to grips ever so painfully with the fact that he is going to die.



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Twain, Mark	Huckleberry Finn	Unlike Tom Sawyer, this is not a children's book. It has been called the greatest American novel and has insights that only adults can fully appreciate. It is, besides, hilariously funny.
Virgil	Aeneid	Classic piece of western literature. Picking up on the tradition of Homer, Virgil tells the epic story of Aeneas' struggle to reach Italy and the wars required to settle finally the wandering Trojans in their new home, which eventually would be Rome. Greatest piece of Latin literature.
Waugh, Evelyn	Brideshead Revisited	Wonderful story about the loves, struggles, weaknesses, and redemption of an English Catholic aristocratic family in the early 20 th century.
Wilder, Thornton	Bridge Of San Luis Rey, The	Short but beautifully written story about the lives of several people caught in a tragic accident—how their lives were all touched by love.

Biography

Author	Title	Description
Ambrose, Stephen	Eisenhower	Story of the man who was both Supreme Allied Commander during World War II and then one of the first presidents during the Cold War.
Appleby	Thomas Jefferson	Riveting study of the complex and influential man who wrote the Declaration of Independence, was a southern slave-owning plantation owner, and shaped the American democracy decisively through his presidency and many other offices.
Augustine, St	Confessions	The first of all autobiographies and still one of the greatest.
Barlow	Thomas Becket	Biography of the man who went from being the handsome, worldly courtier to the zealous prelate, exile, and saint-martyr. A very interesting figure.
Boom, Corrie Ten	Hiding Place, The	Autobiographical account of a Dutch family which hid Jews in their home during World War II to save them from the Nazis
Brands, HW	First American, The	Comprehensive and readable biography of Benjamin Franklin.
Cartledge, Paul	Alexander the Great	Discusses the life of the man who conquered most of the known world before dying at the age of 33, thereby making Greek culture and language known everywhere.
Chernow, Ron	Alexander Hamilton	Founding father and first secretary of the Treasury.
Chernow, Ron	Washington: A Life	Great one-volume biography of George Washington.
Chesterton, G.K.	St. Thomas Aquinas: the Dumb Ox	Wonderful story of the man who was the great synthesizer of Aristotle and Christianity.
De Wohl, Louis	Last Crusader, The	Historical novel about Don Juan of Austria and the Battle of Lepanto in 1571.
Denton, Jeremiah	When Hell Was in Session	First-hand account of an American officer's seven years of torture, resistance, and leadership in Vietnamese POW camps.



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Frank, Anne	Diary of a Young Girl, The	Book based on the diary of a young Dutch Jewish girl as she was in hiding for 2 years during the Nazi occupation of the Netherlands.
Hillenbrand, Laura	Unbroken	A World War II story of the survival, resilience, and redemption of an American flyer whose plane crashed in the Pacific and who was a prisoner of war in Japan.
Manchester, William	American Caesar	Great narrative of Gen. Douglas MacArthur; interesting perspective on World War II and the Korean Conflict.
Manchester, William	Last Lion, The	Biography of Winston Churchill.
Maraniss, David	When Pride Still Mattered	Story of one of America's greatest football coaches and molders of men, Vince Lombardi.
Massie, R.K.	Peter the Great	Story of the amazing ruler who transformed Russia with his rule in the 17 th and 18 th centuries.
McCullough, David	John Adams	Gripping biography of John Adam, from his roots in Quincy, through his legal career and many years of service to the founding of the United States.
Morison, Samuel Eliot	Admiral of The Ocean Sea	Best biography of Christopher Columbus. Morrison is an expert mariner as well as historian, so he conveys greater appreciation for Columbus's achievement.
Morris, Edmund	Rise of Theodore Roosevelt, The	An excellent account of Roosevelt's rise to the Presidency, winner of the Pulitzer Prize.
Oates, Stephen B.	With Malice Toward None	Superb biography of Abraham Lincoln, probably the best in one volume.
Plutarch	Plutarch's Lives	One of the first biographers, Plutarch tells the story of Greece and Rome's most famous individuals.
Smith, Gene	Lee and Grant	Dual biography of Robert E. Lee and U.S. Grant.
Treese, Patricia	Man for Others, A	Outstanding biography of St. Maximilian Kolbe.
Twain, Mark	Joan of Arc	Twain's masterwork biography of this medieval French saint.
Waugh, Evelyn	Edmund Campion	Biography of martyr Edmund Campion in England.

History

Author	Title	Description
Alexander, Caroline	Endurance, The	True story of Shackleton's ill-fated expedition to Antarctica in 1914, an amazing feat of courage and survival. Illustrated with remarkable photos.
Ambrose, Stephen	Citizen Soldiers	Excellent account of D-Day invasion and its aftermath, seen through the eyes of participants. Winner of Pulitzer Prize.
Ambrose, Stephen	D-Day	Thrilling account of the D-Day, the largest amphibious invasion in human history. Full of interviews and stories of first-hand participants.



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<i>Author</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Description</i>
Beeching, Jack	Galleys of Lepanto, The	A companion book to Bradford's story of the siege of Malta. Recounts how the Turks were defeated at Lepanto in 1571, a battle that altered the course of history.
Beevor, Antony	Stalingrad	Detailed narrative of the horrific battle of Stalingrad in World War II.
Belloc, Hillaire	Characters of the Reformation	Account of the major figures of the Protestant Reformation in the 16 th century.
Birnbaun, Louis	Red Dawn at Lexington	One of the best narrative histories about the outbreak of the American Revolution, from the Boston Tea Party to the close of 1776.
Bishop, Jim	Day Lincoln Was Shot, The	An hour-by-hour account of events leading up to Lincoln's assassination.
Bradford, Ernle	Great Siege, The	Stirring narrative of how the Knights of Malta held off the Turkish invasion of that island in 1565, thus saving Europe.
Brickhill, Paul	The Great Escape	An insider's account of the 1944 mass escape from the German prisoner of war camp Stalag Luft III for British and Commonwealth airmen.
Catton, Bruce	Part 1 of 3: The Coming Fury	Explores the causes and events leading to the start of the war, culminating in its first major combat, the First Battle of Bull Run.
Catton, Bruce	Part 2 of 3: Terrible Swift Sword	Both sides mobilize for a massive war effort and the story continues through 1862, ending with the Battle of Fredericksburg.
Catton, Bruce	Part 3 of 3: Never Call Retreat	The war continues through Vicksburg, Gettysburg, and the bloody struggles of 1864 and 1865 before the final surrender.
Catton, Bruce	Stillness at Appomattox, A	Won the Pulitzer prize. Describes the campaigns of Grant in Virginia during 1864 to the end of the war in 1865.
Fischer, David Hackett	Paul Revere's Ride	Story of Paul Revere and his famous exploits, much more interesting than the popular myth about him. Good companion book to Birnbaum's above.
Fischer, David Hackett	Washington's Crossing	Well written account of Washington's crossing the Delaware River and the New Jersey campaign of 1777, a turning point in the American Revolution.
Hamilton, Edith	Greek Way, The	The best short introduction to the Greeks and who they were.
Hamilton, Edith	Roman Way, The	The best short introduction to the Romans and who they were.
Herodotus	Persian Wars, The	Written by the "father of history", this tells the epic story of the background leading to and the events of the 5 th century B.C. wars between the Persians and the Greeks.
Hillenbrand, Laura	Seabiscuit	Exciting story of Seabiscuit, one of the greatest race horses of the 1930's, and of the colorful characters involved in his training and racing. One of the best sports narratives of recent times, an excellent read.
Hughes, Philip	Popular History of the Catholic Church, A	Only the first 3 editions are good.
Keegan, John	Face of Battle, The	An up-close study of 3 famous battles: Agincourt, Waterloo, and the Somme.



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Keegan, John	Mask of Command, The	Four military commanders: Alexander the Great, Wellington, U.S. Grant, Hitler
Klein, Maury	Days of Defiance	Gripping, detailed narrative of events leading up to the Southern attack on Ft. Sumter in Charlestown harbor, the spark that ignited the American Civil War.
Lafore, Lawrence	Long Fuse , The	The very best popular, one-volume study about the origins of World War I.
Lord, Walter	Night to Remember, A	Sinking of the Titanic.
Mattingly, Garrett	Armada, The	Incomparable narrative about the ill-fated Spanish armada and its defeat against the British in 1588.
McCullough, David	Great Bridge, The	Engineering feat: building of the Brooklyn Bridge.
McCullough, David	Path Between the Seas, The	Excellent account of one of engineering's greatest achievements: the building of the Panama Canal.
McPherson, James	Battle Cry Of Freedom	Pulitzer-Prize winning 1-volume history of the American Civil War: causes, events, personalities, outcome. A great book.
Moore & Galloway	We were Soldiers Once... and Young	Detailed, very moving narrative about the La Drang Offensive during the Vietnam War, 1965.
Orlandis, Jose	Short History of the Catholic Church, A	Good introduction to church history.
Rawicz, Slavomir	The Long Walk	Incredible story of a small group's escape to India from a work camp in Siberia - on foot.
Thucydides	History of the Peloponnesian War	First-hand account of the 5 th -century B.C. Peloponnesian War between the Athenians and Spartans, and what this war revealed about the actions characteristic of human nature.
Zamoyski, Adam	Moscow 1812	Account of Napoleon's invasion of Russia in 1812 and its effects on European history.

General Interest

Author	Title	Description
Chesterton, G.K.	Everlasting Man , The	Two-part history of mankind, Christ, and Christianity. It is to some extent a conscious rebuttal of H.G. Well's book which argued for a purely evolutionary origin of man and against the divinity of Christ.
Chesterton, G.K.	Orthodoxy	Classic inquiry into man's place in and knowledge of the world.
Frankl, Victor	Man's Search for Meaning	Philosophical reflection on human nature and the meaning of life, based on the author's first-hand experience in a Nazi concentration camp.
Lewis, C.S.	Great Divorce, The	A work of fantasy that portrays Christian perceptions of the life after death allegorically, specifically one individual's journey from hell/purgatory ("the grey town") to heaven and salvation.
Lewis, C.S.	Screwtape Letters	Shrewd moral insights from correspondence between an arch-devil and his apprentice.



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Author	Title	Description
Schall, James	Another Sort of Learning	Excellent guide to getting a liberal arts education.

Philosophy

Author	Title	Description
Adler, Mortimer	Ten Philosophical Mistakes	Simple, clear account of ten mistakes made by modern philosophers.
Aristotle	Nicomachean Ethics	Ethical treatise on man's end, happiness, virtue, friendship, pleasure, and contemplation.
Kreeft, Peter	Back to Virtue	A popular philosophy book which aims to give traditional moral wisdom for those beset with modern moral confusion.
Kreeft, Peter	Refutation of Moral Relativism, A	Entertaining and helpful refutation of moral relativism, written in dialogue form.
Lewis, C.S.	Abolition of Man, The	Reflections on modern education; defends objective values and natural law, and their compatibility with science.
Lewis, C.S.	Problem of Pain, The	Treatise on the age-old question of how human suffering can be compatible with an all-good, all-powerful God.
Pieper, Josef	Four Cardinal Virtues, The	Modern treatise on the four cardinal virtues.
Plato	Apology of Socrates	Dialogue with the defense speech of Socrates against the charge of impiety and corrupting the youth; the trial took place in 399 B.C.
Plato	Five Great Dialogues	Some of Plato's finest dialogues, surrounding the trial, last days, and death of Socrates.