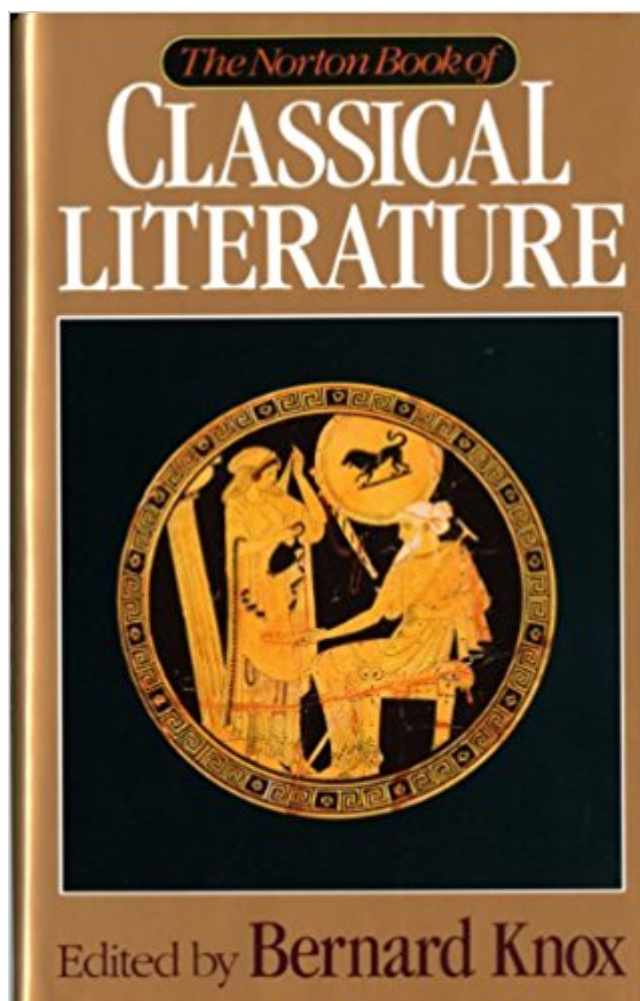


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# The Norton Book Of Classical Literature



## Synopsis

An anthology of classical literature features more than three hundred selections, including pieces on the origins of the Greek language, works by Homer, discussion on the fall of Rome and St. Augustine, and more.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Text: English (translation) Original Language: Latin, Greek

"The literature of the classical world that has survived is a pitiful remnant of what once existed...". So begins Bernard Knox's preface to an anthology that introduces the modern reader to the enormous breadth and rich variety of that "pitiful remnant" - the foundation of Western literature and culture, the inspiration for writers from Dante to Shakespeare to T. S. Eliot. However much - or little - of it we may have read, classical literature has shaped our world and how we perceive it. Yet for most of us classical writing is little more than a narrow circle of legendary figures. The names of Homer, Aeschylus, Plato, Virgil, and Saint Augustine are familiar, but behind their work lies a vast fellowship of writers with a common mythological and artistic heritage. The Norton Book of Classical Literature thus includes not only the "greats" but also significant though lesser known figures and traditions: archaic lyric poets, Alexandrian Greeks, and Roman satirists, for example. Also recovered for us are the breathtaking variety of forms that literature took - epic, lyric, ode, dithyramb, tragedy, comedy, history, dialogue, idyll, epigram, satire, to name a few. The translations selected for this collection,

from classic nineteenth-century versions to as yet unpublished manuscripts, reflect the diversity of the works themselves and bring them to us with eloquence and clarity. In his brilliant introduction - an account of the development of classical literature from the origins of the Greek language and Homer to the fall of Rome and Saint Augustine - Knox distills for the general reader a complex literary tradition and allows even those with a thorough knowledge of classical writing to see that tradition anew. Informative notes throughout the book allow works - some long forgotten, ignored, or misinterpreted to emerge, as vital and compelling today as they were so many centuries ago. From the lyrical precision of Archilochus and Sappho to the epic sweep of Apollonius and Virgil; from the storytelling genius of Herodotus and Ovid to the philosophical ruminations of Marcus Aurelius; from the sobering histories of Thucydides and Tacitus to the satires of Petronius and Juvenal; from tantalizing papyrus fragments only recently unearthed to the complete *Antigone*, Sophocles' tragic masterpiece - *The Norton Book of Classical Literature* revives what for many of us has become a lost tradition.

Odd editorial lapses like the assertion in the intro. that St. Augustine was \*born\* in Hippo (the intro. to the selection from the *Confessions* gets that right) suggest that more could be done to make the volume impeccable. I wanted to compare this with W. H. Auden's venerable *Viking Portable Greek Reader*, whose intro. he reliably wrote and proofread (it's a classic in its own right, with a wonderful typology of heroes that may or may not have anything to do with the Greeks). Some have faulted Knox and Norton for trying to include Roman material here, but it's a good idea and the inclusions, in good translations, are interesting and valuable. Plato and philosophy get somewhat short shrift, but Auden included the whole *Timaeus*, not my favorite decision, in the *Viking*. I'm thinking of it for a course, but it's also a nice book to have around and read at as the spirit moves.

The selections and the introductory commentaries are very good. The general introduction has many insights into the writers in the collection. This collection presents a sampling of classical writers and as such allows one to read some of the classics without the need purchase an entire book by one writer. One can then determine which writers to read more extensively.

Good anthology, but for college work I would prefer more complete works rather than excerpts. This comment applies especially to the plays, where snippets of the *Orestiad*, for instance, just do not give the students the whole picture. In that case, even one full play, with excerpts from the others, would be a superior view.

Fast shipping excellent book

Very good conditon , what i needed for my class.

This is a required book for my college level HIST 270 class, and I have learned so much from it.

I'm a retired teacher who, over the years, taught writing and literature from grades 9 through 12 in high school and to undergraduate students in college. While I've read my share of classical literature, I have never taken a course that dealt exclusively with this material, so now I've decided to teach myself that course I didn't have. I may use other materials as well, but I can count on Norton to provide authoritative versions of the texts, to be comprehensive in its coverage, and to supply accurate supplementary information. I was fortunate to get a used copy from seller Giorgio Medranda in very good condition at a very reasonable price.

Bought to replace my lost college World Lit Book.

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