

Not Your School's Reading List 15: More Inspiring Books for Young Men

At *Intellectual Takeout*, we strive to offer not only commentary on current events but also tangible advice for engaging with our increasingly chaotic world. That's why we're proud to present this ongoing series of literature recommendations.

Previously, we've featured [books for young men](#), and we're excited to publish a part two with 10 more selections. Perfect for high school-aged boys, these books are a mix of fiction and nonfiction with events spanning hundreds of years. Filled with adventure, war, and epic stories, there's something here to engross any older teen boy.

Read the previous list [here](#).

1. Sun Tzu. [*The Art of War*](#). c. 401 B.C.

"Twenty-Five Hundred years ago, Sun Tzu wrote this classic book of military strategy based on Chinese warfare and military thought. Since that time, all levels of military ... and civilization have adapted these teachings for use in politics, business and everyday life. The Art of War is a book which should be used to gain advantage of opponents in the boardroom and battlefield alike."

2. Charles Dickens. [*David*](#)

Copperfield. 1850.

“David Copperfield is the story of a young man’s adventures on his journey from an unhappy and impoverished childhood to the discovery of his vocation as a successful novelist. ... In David Copperfield – the novel he described as his ‘favourite child’ – Dickens drew revealingly on his own experiences to create one of the most exuberant and enduringly popular works, filled with tragedy and comedy in equal measure.”

3. E.D.E.N. Southworth. Ishmael. 1850.

“You will never read a story that is more inspiring and challenging than *Ishmael*. The heights of success achieved by this young man reveal little of the utter poverty into which he was born. ... His perseverance and determination to educate himself in law gave him the opportunity to influence the highest levels of government. E.D.E.N. Southworth captures the rich panorama of sights and sounds in rural Maryland in the decades prior to the Civil War.”

4. Ivan Turgenev. Fathers and Sons. 1862.

“Bazarov—a gifted, impatient, and caustic young man—has journeyed from school to the home of his friend Arkady Kirsanov. But soon Bazarov’s outspoken rejection of authority and social conventions touches off quarrels, misunderstandings, and romantic entanglements that will utterly transform the Kirsanov household and reflect the changes taking place across all of nineteenth-century Russia. ... A timeless depiction of generational conflict during social upheaval, it ... offers modern-day readers much to reflect upon as they look around at their own tumultuous, ever changing

world.”

5. Rudyard Kipling. Captains Courageous. 1897.

“At the start of *Captains Courageous*, one of literature’s most beloved stories of the sea, a spoiled rich boy is literally swept away – dashed overboard from an ocean liner. Luckily, young Harvey Cheyne is rescued by a passing fishing vessel. ... Compelled by the captain to earn his keep, Harvey ... learns the rewards of an honest day’s labor amid the gruff and hearty companionship of the crewmen, who teach him to be worth his salt as they fish the waters off the Grand Banks of Newfoundland.”

6. Boy Scouts of America. Boy Scouts Handbook: The First Edition. 1911.

“Filled with practical advice for everyone, ... [the *Boy Scouts Handbook*] contains everything from safety tips on swimming and instructions for putting up a tent to directions for making an aquarium and pointers on how to identify common North American trees. ... But more than just a guide to outdoor life, the handbook also offers timeless observations on politeness, patriotism, and good citizenship. As useful and valid today as it was when first published nearly 100 years ago, the *Boy Scouts Handbook* will delight Americana enthusiasts as much as it will be treasured by collectors and nature lovers.”

7. A.H. Brun. Troublous Times. 1931.

“As the First World War drew to a close, the fate of the

thousands of prisoners of war interred in Russia still hung in the balance. As part of the Danish legation charged with the care of Austro-Hungarian prisoners of war, Captain A. H. Brun took up special assignment for the relief of those prison camps in Russian Central Asia, at the far-flung edge of the empire. The events that followed were anything but routine, witnessing the communist revolution from its genesis in St. Petersburg, Brun would see the Bolshevik tide follow him on his journey to Russian Central Asia, and detail his firsthand account of the havoc it wreaked."

8. Viktor E. Frankl. Man's Search for Meaning. 1959.

"Psychiatrist Viktor Frankl's memoir has riveted generations of readers with its descriptions of life in Nazi death camps and its lessons for spiritual survival. Based on his own experience and the stories of his patients, Frankl argues that we cannot avoid suffering but we can choose how to cope with it, find meaning in it, and move forward with renewed purpose."

9. Erich Maria Remarque. A Time to Love and a Time to Die. 1959.

"After two years at the Russian front, Ernst Graeber finally receives three weeks' leave. ... Then, when Graeber arrives home, he finds his house bombed to ruin and his parents nowhere in sight. Nobody knows if they are dead or alive. As his leave draws to a close, Graeber reaches out to Elisabeth, a childhood friend. Like him, she is imprisoned in a world she did not create. But in a time of war, love seems a world away. And sometimes, temporary comfort can lead to something unexpected and redeeming."

10. Tikhon Shevkunov. [Everyday Saints and Other Stories](#). 2011.

“Discover a wondrous, enigmatic, remarkably beautiful, yet absolutely real world. Peer into the mysterious Russian soul, where happiness reigns no matter what life may bring. ... This book has been the cause of many sleepless but happy nights: ‘I couldn’t put it down—was sorry when it ended’ is the common reaction.”

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