

PONDR

Your curated reading, beautifully typeset

Issue #0, August Edition

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Of Studies

Francis Bacon

Essays (1625) · 1625 · ~1 MIN READ



Studies serve for delight, for ornament, and for ability. Their chief use for delight is in privateness and retiring; for ornament, is in discourse; and for ability, is in the judgment and disposition of business.

Crafty men condemn studies, simple men admire them, and wise men use them; for they teach not their own use; but that is a wisdom without them, and above them, won by observation. Read not to contradict and confute; nor to believe and take for granted; nor to find talk and discourse; but to weigh and consider.

Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested; that is, some books are to be read only in parts; others to be read, but not curiously; and some few to be read wholly, and with diligence and attention. Reading maketh a full man; conference a ready man; and writing an exact man.

On Reading and Books

Arthur Schopenhauer

Parerga and Paralipomena · 1851 · ~1 MIN READ



When we read, another person thinks for us: we merely repeat his mental process. It is the same as the pupil, in learning to write, following with his pen the lines that have been written in pencil by the teacher. Accordingly, in reading, the work of thinking is, for the greater part, done for us.

This is the reason why we feel quite sensibly relieved when we turn from our own thoughts to reading. But, in reading, our head is, however, really only the arena of some one else's thoughts. So that it often happens that the man who reads a great deal — that is to say, almost the whole day, and recreates himself by spending the intervals in thoughtless diversion, gradually loses the capacity for thinking.

It is the same with a man who is always riding: at last he forgets how to walk. This is the case with many learned persons: they have read themselves stupid. For to read in every spare moment, and to read constantly, is more paralysing to the mind than constant manual work, which, at any rate, allows one to follow one's own thoughts.

Where I Lived, and What I Lived For

Henry David Thoreau

Walden · 1854 · ~1 MIN READ



I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived. I did not wish to live what was not life, living is so dear; nor did I wish to practise resignation, unless it was quite necessary.

I wanted to live deep and suck out all the marrow of life, to live so sturdily and Spartan-like as to put to rout all that was not life, to cut a broad swath and shave close, to drive life into a corner, and reduce it to its lowest terms.

Our life is frittered away by detail. Simplicity, simplicity, simplicity! I say, let your affairs be as two or three, and not a hundred or a thousand. Instead of three meals a day, if it be necessary eat but one; instead of a hundred dishes, five; and reduce other things in proportion.

Self-Reliance

Ralph Waldo Emerson

Essays: First Series · 1841 · ~1 MIN READ



There is a time in every man's education when he arrives at the conviction that envy is ignorance; that imitation is suicide; that he must take himself for better, for worse, as his portion; that though the wide universe is full of good, no kernel of nourishing corn can come to him but through his toil bestowed on that plot of ground which is given to him to till.

Trust thyself: every heart vibrates to that iron string. Accept the place the divine providence has found for you, the society of your contemporaries, the connection of events. Great men have always done so, and confided themselves childlike to the genius of their age.

A foolish consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds, adored by little statesmen and philosophers and divines. With consistency a great soul has simply nothing to do. Speak what you think now in hard words, and to-morrow speak what to-morrow thinks in hard words again, though it contradict every thing you said to-day.

Pondr

This issue of Pondr was generated on demand from a curated selection of saved articles.

Typeset in a two-column layout using standard web fonts and rendered with WeasyPrint. Layout designed for balance, readability, and rhythm.

Published for: Pondr

Edition: #0

Printed: August 2026

COVER IMAGE ATTRIBUTION

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